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CHAPTERS
IN THE
HISTORY OF JOURNALISM
VOL. I.

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ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS.

Chapters IN The History of Journalism

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'THE STORY OF OUR COLONIES' ETC.



IN TWO VOLUMES

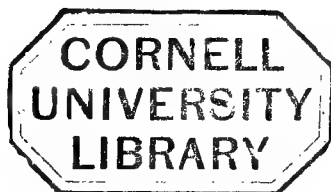
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PREFACE.

A COMPLETE account of English Newspapers, past and present, would fill many volumes, which, when written, would probably find very few readers. In this book only such a selection from the profuse details at hand is offered as may sufficiently indicate the nature and quality of the whole, and may serve especially to show the connection of journalism in its several stages with the literary and the political history of our country. So much as is here said about the chronology and mechanism of newspapers, from their first rude commencement down to the present day, will, I hope, fill many gaps and correct many errors in previous works on the subject. But my aim has chiefly been to call attention to the ways in which newspapers have influenced the general progress of society—sometimes hindering as well as helping it, and have been used as agents for such help or hindrance.

From Milton's day onwards, the value of newspapers as auxiliaries to their public work, whether

good or bad, has been recognised by politicians as like and unlike one another as Bolingbroke, Walpole, Burke, Fox, Pitt, Canning, Peel, Russell, Palmerston, and Gladstone; and while several of these, and many other statesmen, have themselves been journalists, they have been assisted or resisted in each generation by professed men of letters like Defoe, Swift, Steele, Fielding, Coleridge, Leigh Hunt, and Albany Fonblanque—not to mention any writers of our own times. The relations of newspapers with politics, in successive generations and under various direction, are worth understanding. So, too, are the relations of newspapers with literature. Some of our most eminent journalists have not been men of letters by profession, and some famous authors have not enhanced their fame by their newspaper work. Though journalism is a branch of literature, moreover, it has rules and methods of its own; and much that may be good as journalism is faulty as literature. But journalism has progressed as a phase of authorship, no less than as a powerful engine for the political advancement of the community, during the past two centuries and more. It has only been possible for me to take a rapid survey of this progress. Yet I trust that I have been able to throw light on some lines of our nation's growth which have hitherto been overlooked or inadequately traced.

Many incidents and episodes in the history of journalism had previously been touched upon by Nichols, Chalmers, and other antiquaries, and by writers of gossip-books and memoirs ; but the first published effort to treat of that history as a whole or in a separate work appears in 'The Fourth Estate: Contributions towards a History of Newspapers and of the Liberty of the Press,' written by Frederick Knight Hunt in 1850. This painstaking and instructive work was followed in 1859 by 'The History of British Journalism from the Foundation of the Newspaper Press in England to the Repeal of the Stamp Act in 1855,' from the pen of Alexander Andrews. From both books I have obtained much help ; but, diligent as their writers were, they left many things unsaid and said many things inaccurately. Their narratives closed, moreover, at dates now somewhat remote, Knight Hunt—the more trustworthy though the less compendious of the two—being intentionally reticent, indeed, about much that had happened in his own time. Since then we have had from the late James Grant two stout volumes on 'The Newspaper Press : its Origin, Progress, and Present Position,' and a supplementary volume on 'The Metropolitan Weekly and Provincial Press,' which were published in 1871 and 1872, but which, though some of his own reminiscences are acceptable, did not contribute

much towards elucidation of the subject. Mr. Charles Pebody's 'English Journalism and the Men who have Made it,' issued in 1882, is a bright little shilling volume, mainly compiled from Grant's book, but avoiding most of its blunders and containing some fresh and welcome information. Neither this, however, nor Mr. Joseph Hatton's 'Journalistic London : being a Series of Sketches of the Famous Pens and Papers of the Day,' also issued in 1882, occupies much of the ground on which I have ventured to tread. Nor do such other books as Mr. Henry Sampson's comprehensive and entertaining 'History of Advertising from the Earliest Times' and Mr. Mason Jackson's 'Pictorial Press ; its Origin and Progress.'

Except as regards recent events, and matters of general history and biography concerning which it would have been mere pedantry to cite authorities, I have been careful to specify in the text or in foot-notes all the sources of my information as to facts and anecdotes given in these volumes. A great many statements in the later chapters are unvouched for, as they are based either on my own knowledge or on the information of friends.

To all these friends—some of long standing and some who, strangers before, have shown their friendship by the valuable help they have rendered me—I

tender my hearty thanks, which are none the less hearty because so many prefer to be anonymous that I think it better to mention no names at all. I must, however, acknowledge my great indebtedness to the authorities of the British Museum, both for the ready help they have given in answering my inquiries, and for the special facilities they afforded me towards consulting the splendid collection of old and new newspapers in their charge.

By way of excuse for my dealing with so large a theme as newspaper history, I may mention that my own experience as a journalist extends over more than twenty years. That experience has helped me to much of the information here given, and is my warrant for the comments and suggestions I have ventured to make. If I have devoted rather more space—less than a dozen pages in all—to the affairs of ‘The Examiner’ and ‘The Weekly Dispatch’ while they were under my charge, and to other papers to which I have contributed, than to some matters of equal or greater importance, it was only because I had fuller and more precise knowledge of those papers than of others with which I am acquainted only at second hand and as a reader, and was thus better able to use them for purposes of general illustration. In the references it seemed necessary to make to public questions connected with news-

paper politics and tactics I have not attempted to conceal my own opinions ; but, though living persons and present concerns have been frankly spoken about on occasion, I trust that I have in no case exceeded the limits of fair and honest criticism, or allowed personal feeling to bias either the praise or the blame that it appeared incumbent on me to offer.

41 PRIORY ROAD, BEDFORD PARK, LONDON, W.

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ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS

CHAPTER I.

OUR EARLIEST NEWSPAPERS.

1621—1660.

ENGLISH newspapers only began in the second half of the eighteenth century to assume their modern shape, and to claim the place they now hold in politics and literature. But they were started early in the seventeenth century, and their preliminaries can be traced much farther back.

Newsletters preceded newspapers. In far-off times, before the art of printing was known, few who were not ecclesiastics could read or write, and those, themselves chiefly ecclesiastics, whose public duties made them seek or need more news of the day than was conveyed in official minutes, or circulated in alehouse gossip or the tittle-tattle of the market-place, had to trust to the correspondence of friends or of hired agents for their information. So it continued long after the printing-press had been invented. During the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and James I., ministers of state, merchants, and all others whose interests or obligations extended beyond ear-shot, had newswriters

in their pay.¹ The many who could not afford to employ news-writers of their own picked up at second-hand such chit-chat, true or false, trivial or serious, as was allowed to reach them by the fortunate few ; and among the gossip-haunts in London, three hundred years or so ago, before coffee-houses were in vogue, the old Exchange and the old church of St. Paul were famous. 'These be news cast abroad to feed the common sort,' says one in John Florio's 'Second Fruits,' published in 1591. 'Prognostications, news, devices, and letters from foreign countries, good Master Cæsar, are but used as confections to feed the common people withal.' To which good Master Cæsar replies, 'I am almost of your mind, for I seldom see these written reports prove true. A man must give no more credit to Exchange news and Paul's news than to fugitives' promises and players' fables.'

With or without good cause, it was the fashion of book-writers to make merry over the readiness of our ancestors to be gulled by primitive newsmongers ; but written and verbal newsmongering was a profitable trade, and printed newsmongering was soon combined with it. 'If any read nowadays,' Burton lamented in his 'Anatomy of Melancholy,' in 1614, 'it is a play-book or a pamphlet of news.' Perhaps the trade was not too much caricatured by Ben Jonson in 'The Staple of News,' which was performed in 1625. In this heavy comedy Cymbal is 'master of the Staple,' that is, owner or manager of a shop or office for the collection and dis-

¹ We are told, for instance, how, quite late in Elizabeth's reign, Sir Robert Sidney, Sir Philip Sidney's younger brother, 'kept a correspondence with Rowland White, the post-master, a notable busy man, who constantly writ over to him at Flushing, when he was resident there as governor, the news and intrigues of the court,' and how, in consideration of White's services, Sir Robert 'allowed him a salary.'—Collins, *Memorials of State*, preface, and vol. ii. p. 4, *note*.

tribution of news, and he is proud to describe his business to young Pennyboy :—

This is the outer room, where my clerks sit,
And keep their sides, the register in their midst :
The examiner—he sits private there within :
And here I have my several rolls and files
Of news by the alphabet, and all are put
Under their heads.

The heads are various—‘authentic and apocryphal ; news of doubtful credit, as barbers’ news ; tailors’ news ; porters’ and watermen’s news ; news of the season ; vacation news, term news, and Christmas news ; news of the faction, as the Reformed news, Protestant news, and Pontifical news,’ and much else, causing Pennyboy to exclaim, ‘This is fine, and bears a brave relation!’

One of Cymbal’s customers is a countrywoman, who hurries in, asking for

A groat’s worth of news, I care not what,
To carry down this Saturday to our vicar.

And the newsvendor’s answer is—

O, you are a butter-woman ! Ask Nathaniel,
The clerk there.¹

Ben Jonson was here punning on the name of Nathaniel Butter, a name memorable in newspaper history.

Long before any regular newspaper was produced, and while the rigid Tudor laws against unlicensed printing were in force, stray news-pamphlets and news-ballads were issued, some of them with the sanction, others in defiance, of the authorities.² They were small quarto books, of twelve or more pages, with no more

¹ *The Staple of News*, act i. scene 2.

² Among the earliest extant were *News out of Kent*, in doggerel rhyme, printed in 1561, and *New News, containing a short Rehearsal of Stukeley’s and Morris’s Rebellion*, printed in 1579.

than three or four hundred words in a page, and generally, when not reporting noteworthy occurrences in England, they merely translated and reproduced the summaries of foreign news-writers.¹ One of these publications, entitled, 'News from Spain,' was 'imprinted at London for Nathaniel Butter,' in 1611. Another, and more important, was 'The Courant, or Weekly News from Foreign Parts,' 'taken out of the High Dutch,' and dated October 9, 1621, of which Butter was also the publisher.

Butter seems to have been during at least thirty years the busiest English vendor of printed news, and to him must be accorded foremost rank among the precursors of journalism in our country. His occupation was chiefly that of 'a writer, or transcriber rather, of books,' as he calls himself in one of his publications; but he sometimes appears as a printer, and among his rivals or associates during the reign of James I. were two firms of printers or booksellers — Nicholas Bourne and Thomas Archer, whose shops were 'at the Royal Exchange, and in Pope's-head Palace,' and Nathaniel Newberry and William Sheffard, 'under St. Peter's Church, in Cornhill, and in Pope's-head Alley, at the sign of the Star.' We may take it for granted that Butter was the manager of some such establishment for the collection and dissemination of gossip as Ben Jonson introduces us to in 'The Staple

¹ The *Gazzetta* of Venice, an official news-sheet which began to be circulated in manuscript early in the sixteenth century, and to appear in print before its close, and other foreign pioneers of journalism, such as the Cologne *Gallo-Belgicus*, started in 1588, now and then found their way into England. The *English Mercurie*, of which four drafts in manuscript and three printed numbers are in the British Museum, and which latter purported to have been 'imprinted at London' in 1588, and to have been 'published by authority, for the suppression of false reports,' accepted as genuine by Chalmers and other antiquaries, was in 1839 shown by Thomas Watts to be a clumsy forgery.

of News,' circulating it in written letters and by word of mouth as well as through the printing press, and that in this latter department he was assisted by Bourne and Archer, Newberry and Sheffard, and others, as publishers. Whatever may have been the nature and variety of the unprinted news that he distributed, his printed work was chiefly made up of translations from foreign newsletters, and even these were of the baldest description. To him, however, belongs the credit of having started the plan of issuing periodical news-sheets, which were the forerunners of regular newspapers.

Of 'The Courant, or Weekly News,' only the number for October 9, 1621, with that title, is known to us, and, though a goodly assortment of similar news-pamphlets of later date, evidently parts of one series, are extant, so many appear to have been lost, and there is so much confusion arising from variations of title, and from the frequent substitution of other names for Butter's in the imprints, that it is impossible to ascertain the order and sequence in which they were issued, or to discriminate between Butter's own share in the undertaking and the shares of Bourne, Archer, and others who were evidently in some sort of partnership with him. Most of these pamphlets are called 'Weekly News,' but nearly all have different sub-headings, and in some the headings are quite distinct, nor are the dates at regular intervals. Thus, in the 'Weekly News' for August 23, 1622, Butter announced that 'the two former "News," the one dated the 2nd, the other the 13th, do carry a like title and have dependence one upon another, which manner of printing he doth purpose to continue weekly, by God's assistance, from the best and most certain intelligence;' but he straightway broke his rule, producing 'Two Great Battles very lately Fought,'

on September 2, and 'Count Mansfield's Proceedings since the Last Battle,' on September 9, and styling neither of them 'Weekly News.' It did not occur to him to number his papers till October 15, 1622, when what may be regarded as the first of a fresh series of 'Weekly News' was marked No. 1. After that the numbering was consecutive for a twelvemonth, another start with No. 1 being made in October 1623; but the titles were still varied. Sometimes we have 'The News of this Present Week,' sometimes 'The Last News,' sometimes 'More News,' and occasionally quite different headings, as in the number styled 'Brief Abstracts out of Divers Letters of Trust, Relating the News of this Present Week.'¹

From all this, and much more which it would be tedious to recount, it appears that journalism was in its infancy when Butter and his friends worked at it. Our earliest newspapers were certainly brought out very irregularly. They were also but scantily supplied with such information as we look for in newspapers nowadays. Home affairs being eschewed through fear of the licencer, foreign events of importance were for the most part dealt with very superficially, and trivial concerns often received inordinate notice. Such few comments as were given along with the scraps of news were shallow and commonplace.² Faulty and slight,

¹ Valuable collections of these old news-pamphlets or primitive newspapers are in the British Museum and the Bodleian libraries. Nichols gives a careful list in his *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. iv. pp. 39-97. See also Knight Hunt's *Fourth Estate*, chapters ii. and iii., and Alexander Andrews's *History of British Journalism*, chapters ii., iii., and iv. In both these works, however, there are several blunders which the careful student will detect.

² Instance this paragraph in the *Weekly News* for October 1622:— 'A true relation of the cruel execution done in Ommelburg, a town in the bishopric of Mentz, upon the persons of two ministers or preachers of the Gospel, by the instigation of the Jesuits. 'Tis most manifestly known to

however, as were the primitive newspapers of the closing years of James I.'s reign, they made a good beginning of the enterprise that was to grow in later generations.

The greater stringency of the press censorship under Charles I., culminating in the memorable and execrable Star Chamber 'decree concerning printing' of July 11, 1637, which revived all the tyranny of Tudor times, hampered even Butter's modest trade in newsmongering, but his 'Weekly News' continued to be issued at intervals, with frequent interruptions from the licensors, and in spite of other obstacles, till 1641. The last number which has come down to us, entitled 'The Continuation of the Foreign Occurrences for Five Weeks Last Past,' and dated January 11 in that year, contains this curious announcement to the 'courteous reader': 'We had thought to have given over printing our foreign avises, for that the licencer (out of a partial affection) would not often let pass apparent truth, and in other things oftentimes so cross and alter, which made us almost weary of printing. But he being vanished and that office fallen upon another, more

all the world that hatred, envy, and dissension reign mightily nowadays; the son is against the father, and the sister against the brother, and in general we are so exasperated one against another that if we could drown one another in a spoon, we would not fetch a pail; as partly appeareth by this present example. Johannes van der Veech and Lambertus Liber, being two Protestant preachers, and having disputed against certain priests at Krugsganck, the Jesuits caused them to be apprehended and afterwards most cruelly to be executed within the town of Ommelburg, August 30, 1622, when the hangman with red-hot pincers pulled the flesh from their bones (so that a heart made of stone would have taken compassion on them), and put them to death with great martyrization. But they have suffered it patiently, as a sheep that is brought to the slaughter-house. About three days after the same, one of the priests, who was called Pater or Father John, aged ninety-six years, was taken about twelve o'clock from his table and was never seen afterwards. Therefore let us pray unto God that He will not judge us according to our deserts, but grant us everlasting salvation.'

understanding in these foreign affairs, and, as you will find, more candid, we are again, by the favour of his majesty and the state, resolved to go on printing, if we shall find the world to give a better acceptance of them than of late by their weekly buying them. It is well known these novels '—that is, news or newspapers—' are well esteemed in all parts of the world but here by the more judicious, which we can impute to no other but the discontinuance of them and the uncertain days of publishing them, which, if the post fail us not, we shall keep a constant day every week therein, whereby every man may constantly expect them.'

These sad yet sanguine sentences remind us that the arbitrariness and harshness of the licensing authorities were not the only hindrances to newspaper prosperity in Stuart times, though these, of course, did quite as much harm indirectly as directly. It was bad enough to be liable to delays in the mails and difficulties with the printers, but it was worse to have to trim and twist every item of news that could bear any offensive interpretation so as to propitiate the censors and avoid the risk of incurring the wrath of courtiers and politicians in office. Readers would naturally be few when they could never be certain of receiving on the appointed days even such scanty and garbled information as was allowed to appear in the 'Weekly News.' Butter, however, had himself partly to blame. Hampered as he was by his surroundings, it was his own fault, or a misfortune he might have prevented, that his mode of writing was not merely tedious and graceless, but often ungrammatical.

The 'Weekly News,' promising to begin a new term of life with the number of January 11, 1641, seems to have died on that day; but in the same year Butter took part in an extension of newspaper enterprise

which, with the advent of the great civil war, was then commenced.

One of the many good results of the overthrow of the Star Chamber in February 1641 was that the censorship of the press, though not abolished, was suspended or disorganised for some time. The old restrictions, which had been tightened under the guidance of Archbishop Laud, were ignored; and during two or three years there was practically no control over authors and printers.¹ Books of all sorts were freely published, and with them news-sheets in abundance, the Long Parliament itself setting an example by ordering to be issued an authentic account of the business done by it and of the principal events officially reported to its members from various parts of the country. 'The Diurnal Occurrences, or Daily Proceedings of both Houses in this great and happy

¹ 'From the beginning of the Long Parliament,' says Professor Masson, 'there had been a relaxation, or rather a total breakdown, of the former laws for the regulation of the press. In the newly found liberty of the nation to think and to speak, all bonds of censorship were burst, and books of all kinds, but especially pamphlets on the current questions, were sent forth by their owners very much at their own discretion. The proportion of those that went through the legal ceremonial of being authorised by an appointed licencer, and registered in the Stationers' books by the Company's clerk under further order from one of the Company's wardens, must, I should say, have been quite inconsiderable in comparison with the number that flew about printed almost anywhere and anyhow. . . . The Parliament tried to institute a new army of censorship in the form of Committees for Printing, and licensors appointed by these Committees. Such licensors were either members of Parliament selected for the duty, or parliamentary officials, or persons out of doors in whom Parliament could trust. Through 1641 and 1642 I find the following persons, among others, licensing books: John Pym, Sir Edward Deering, the elder Sir Henry Vane, Mr. (Century) White, and a Dr. Wykes; but I find evidence that the Parliamentary Committee of Printing had really, in a great measure, to leave the licensing of books to the Warden of the Stationers' Company. . . . Censorship and regulation had' (in 1643) 'become an absolute farce.'—*Life of Milton*, vol. iii. pp. 261-268.

Parliament from the 3rd of November, 1640, to the 3rd of November, 1641,' was a stout volume; but it was followed by weekly issues of 'Diurnal Occurrences,' each generally containing eight closely-printed pages in small quarto, and any one was free to reproduce the matter thus supplied by authority, with such other items of news as he chose, provided he did not grossly abuse the liberty allowed to him.

Several weekly papers were accordingly started in 1641 and the following years, among them being one by the indefatigable Butter, with this pretentious title to its first number: 'The Passages in Parliament, from the 3rd of January to the 10th, more fully and exactly taken than the ordinary one hath been, as you will find upon comparing.' 'And,' it was added, as an earnest of Butter's intention to avoid such confusion as had arisen from the appearance of his 'Weekly News' under various headings, 'although the week past doth yield many remarkable passages, as hath been any week before, yet you shall expect no more expression either now or hereafter in the title than "The Passages in Parliament," &c.' A more important paper was 'The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer,' 'sent abroad to prevent misinformation,' and issued by authority of the Long Parliament in opposition to King Charles, whose claim to sovereignty had not yet been openly denied, which first appeared in July 1642; and there were other 'Intelligencers,' and other 'Passages,' and other 'Diurnals.' All these were bald and often clumsily written chronicles, but, having so much of importance to record concerning the progress of the civil war, they were far in advance of the earlier newspapers, and they in their turn were soon improved upon. A great advance in journalism appeared in the 'Mercuries' which began in

1643.¹ About the facts of the civil war these 'Mercuries' are not safe informants, but of its humours they afford amusing and instructive illustration.

The first of the English 'Mercuries' was 'Mercurius Aulicus,' commenced in January 1643 as a counterblast to 'The Kingdom's Intelligencer,' edited for some time by John Birkenhead, and published regularly every week for about three years, after which it appeared at uncertain intervals. 'The world hath long enough been abused with falsehoods,' we are told in the opening paragraph of the first number, 'and there's a weekly cheat put out to nourish the abuse amongst the people, and make them pay for their seducement. And that the world may see that the court is neither so barren of intelligence as it is conceived, nor the affairs thereof in so unprosperous a condition as these pamphlets make them out, it is thought fit to let them truly understand the estate of things, that so they may no longer pretend ignorance or be deceived with untruths.'

'Mercurius Aulicus,' issued from Oxford, where Charles I. had established himself after the battle of Edgehill, was the special champion of the Royalist cause, which it advocated, as Anthony à Wood said, 'with a great deal of wit and buffoonery.'

¹ 'Mercury' was a favourite name both for old newspapers and for those who distributed them. A *Mercurius Francicus*, started in Paris in 1613, lived on till 1647. There were also a *Mercurius Suisce* and a *Genevan Mercurius d'Etat*. Some of the numbers of Butter's *Weekly News* were said to be 'printed for Mercurius Britannicus,' and one of Butter's other publications, issued in 1636, was described as *The Principal Passages of Germany, Italy, France, and other Places, all faithfully taken out of good originals by an English Mercury*. Towards the close of James I.'s reign, says an old writer (*Harleian MSS.*, British Museum, cod. 5,910), 'if I mistake not, began the use of Mercury women, and they it was who dispersed them to the hawkers. These mercuries and hawkers, their business at first was to disperse proclamations, orders of council, acts of parliament, &c.' The mercury women are sometimes referred to in old plays.

Birkenhead, a clever young man of about eight-and-twenty, when he began it, had at one time been secretary to Archbishop Laud, and commended himself to king and courtiers by talents which even his friendly biographer could not applaud. 'The truth is,' we are told, 'had he not been too much given to bantering, which is now taken up by vain and idle people, he might have passed for a good wit; and, had he also expressed himself grateful and respectful to those that had been his benefactors in the time of his necessity, which he did not, but rather slighted them, showing thereby the baseness of his spirit, he might have passed for a friend and a loving companion.'¹ He had a worthier colleague and successor in the production of 'Mercurius Aulicus' in Peter Heylin, who, however, was more successful as a writer of serious books than as a journalist. In the weekly newspaper Birkenhead 'pleased the generality of his readers with his waggeries and buffooneries far more than Heylin.'²

The coarse smartness and violent partisanship of 'Mercurius Aulicus' made it famous, and its success led to the appearance of many rivals, both Royalist and Parliamentary. Of these the foremost in time, and for a while in influence, was 'Mercurius Britannicus, Communicating the Affairs of Great Britain for the Better Information of the People,' which was started in London in August 1643. Its conductor was Marchmont Nedham, then only three-and-twenty, who had been an usher in the Merchant Taylors' School, and was a lawyer's clerk in Gray's Inn when, according to Anthony à Wood, 'siding with the rout and scum of the people, he made them weekly sport by railing at all that is noble in his intelligence, called "Mercurius

¹ Wood, *Athenæ Oxonienses*, vol. iii. p. 1203.

² *Ibid.* p. 556.

Britannicus," wherein his endeavours were to sacrifice the fame of some lord or person of quality—nay, of the king himself—to the beast with many heads.' Concerning his 'scurrilous pamphlets' we are told that 'flying every week into all parts of the nation, 'tis incredible what influence they had upon numbers of unconsidering people, who have a strange presumption that all must needs be true that is in print. This was the Goliath of the Philistines, the great champion of the late usurper, whose pen he was—in comparison with the others, like a weaver's beam.'¹ Nedham proved himself a match for Birkenhead, and outlived him as a journalist. He was one of the few men of that day who made a regular trade of newspaper writing, and, unfortunately for his reputation—though not for his personal advantage—he was an unblushing time-server.²

It would have been surprising if the liberty accorded to newspaper writers by the overthrow of the Star Chamber had not degenerated into licence among the unscrupulous, or been put to bad uses by corrupt hands; and we find it was so. 'Sir John Gell, of Derbyshire,' we read in Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson's memoir of her husband, 'kept the diurnal makers in pension, so that

¹ Wood, *Athenæ Oxonienses*, vol. iii. p. 1180.

² Before the end of 1644, there were at least a score of weekly papers in circulation besides those named above. Among the number were John Taylor's *Mercurius Aquaticus*, or the *Water Poet's answer to all that hath or shall be writ by Mercurius Britannicus*, as Royalist as *Mercurius Aulicus* was; *Mercurius Anglicus*, or a *Post from the North*; *The Military Scribe*, which undertook to give such news as the Royalists cared to publish; and *The Spy*, 'communicating intelligence from Oxford in the interests of the Parliamentarians. So keen was the newspaper war that when Bruno Ryves, late chaplain to the king, produced his *Mercurius Rusticus*, or the *Country's Complaint*, recounting the *Sad Events of this Lamentable War*, George Wither, the Republican poet, opposed to it another *Mercurius Rusticus*, with this motto, 'By your leave, gentlemen, when seriousness takes not effect, perhaps trifling may.'

whatever was done in the neighbouring counties against the enemy was attributed to him ; and thus he hath indirectly purchased himself a name in story which he never merited. Mr. Hutchinson, on the other side, that did well for virtue's sake, and not for the vainglory of it, never would give anything to buy the flatteries of those scribblers, and when one of them once, when he was in town, made mention of something done at Nottingham with falsehood, and had given Gell the glory of an action in which he was not concerned, Mr. Hutchinson rebuked him for it ; whereupon the man begged his pardon, and told him he would write as much for him the next week. But Mr. Hutchinson told him he scorned his mercenary pen, and warned him not to be in any of his concernments ; whereupon the fellow was awed, and he had no more abuse of that kind.' ¹

The wielders of mercenary pens were not always so easily awed, and worse offence was caused by the scurrilous and malicious language with which the journalists of rival parties assailed the opposite camps than by the garbled reports in which they overrated or underrated the exploits of the soldiers or politicians of their own sides in the civil war. In the newswriters' abuse of their privileges, as well as in many of the bulkier publications issued in those years, there was some excuse, if no justification, for the ordinance of the Long Parliament, dated June 14, 1643, 'for the regulating of printing, and for suppressing the great late abuses and frequent disorders in printing many false, scandalous, seditious, libellous, and unlicensed pamphlets, to the great defamation of religion and government.' ²

¹ *Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson.*

² A previous ordinance of March 9, 1643, had empowered the Committee for Examinations to cause houses in which it was suspected that presses were 'kept and employed in the printing of scandalous, lying pamphlets,' to be searched, to destroy any obnoxious literature they found

This order, which remained in force, with frequent additions, for half a century, caused grievous annoyance and much hindrance to the healthy progress of newspaper enterprise ; but it was as ineffectual and as unprofitable as Milton declared that it would be and must be in his ‘*Areopagitica*,’ the eloquent ‘speech for the liberty of unlicensed printing, to the parliament of England,’ which was boldly printed, without any licencer’s imprimatur, in 1644. Milton scornfully and plaintively discoursed on the question of book-licensing in general, and insisted forcibly on the sacred duty of allowing complete freedom to every sort of literature and to every channel for the utterance of unfettered opinion, without much notice of the restraints it was sought to impose on newspapers ; but, a year after the ordinance had been issued, he fairly taunted the Long Parliament on its failure to suppress even such a scurrilous publication as ‘*Mercurius Aulicus*.’ ‘Do we not see, not once or oftener, but weekly,’ he exclaimed, ‘that continued court-libel against the parliament and city printed, as the wet sheets can witness, and dispersed among us, for all that licensing can do ? Yet this is the prime service, a man would think, wherein this order should give proof of itself. “If it were executed,” you’ll say. But certain, if execution be remiss or blindfold now, and in this particular, what will it be hereafter, and in other books ?’¹

there, and also the presses put to such evil uses, and to severely punish the printers and vendors. The later and more stringent order provided that ‘no book, pamphlet, paper, nor part of any such book, pamphlet, or paper, shall from henceforth be printed, bound, stitched, or put to sale by any person or persons whatsoever, unless the same be first approved of and licensed under the hands of such person or persons as both or either of the Houses of Parliament shall appoint for the licensing of the same, and entered in the register book of the Company of Stationers, according to ancient custom.’

¹ *Areopagitica* (Arber’s edition), p. 53.

In so far as the Long Parliament's licensing ordinance had any result at all on newspapers, it seems only to have increased the number and the virulence of the illicit but freely circulated Royalist prints. Several new papers were started in 1644 and the following years, one of special note, though short-lived, being 'Mercurius Pragmaticus.'

After having conducted 'Mercurius Britannicus' for nearly four years in the interests of the Parliamentary party, Marchmont Nedham got into trouble with the authorities, and went over to the side of Charles I. 'In 1647,' says his mocking biographer, 'he left the blessed cause, and, obtaining the favour of a known Royalist to introduce him into his majesty's presence at Hampton Court, he then and there knelt before him and desired forgiveness for what he had written against him and his cause; which being readily granted, he kissed his majesty's hand, and soon after wrote "Mercurius Pragmaticus," which, being very witty, satirical against the Presbyterians, and full of loyalty, made him known to and admired by the bravadoes and wits of those times.'¹ Nedham's new paper was a very clever and unscrupulous advocate and exponent of Royalist views, the prose of each number being prefaced by some smart verses, of which these, in the number for October 5, 1647, may serve as a specimen:—

A Scot and Jesuit, joined in hand,
First taught the world to say
That subjects ought to have command
And princes to obey.

Then both agreed to have no king:
The Scotchman, he cries further,
No bishop—'tis a goodly thing
States to reform by murder.

¹ Wood, *Athenæ Oxonienses*, vol. iii. p. 1180.

Then th' Independent, meek and sly,
 Most lowly lies at lurch,
 And so, to put poor Jocky by,
 Resolves to have no Church.

The king dethroned, the subjects bleed,
 The Church hath no abode :
 Let us conclude they're all agreed
 That here there is no God.

Language like that could hardly be tolerated. On November 27, 1647, the House of Commons appointed a committee 'to find out the authors of "Mercurius Pragmaticus" and "Mercurius Melancholicus"'—another seditious newspaper—'to punish them and the printers and sellers of them, and to seize the impressions of them.'¹

Nedham was not caught, nor was his journal suppressed, but the attempt to reach him was part of a vigorous effort to revive and enforce the licensing ordinance of 1643. On September 20 Sir Thomas Fairfax, writing to the Speaker of the House of Lords, enclosed 'some printed pamphlets not only very scandalous and abusive to this army in particular, but indeed to the whole kingdom in general,' and urged 'that these and all of the like nature be suppressed for the future.' The appeal was promptly responded to. On September 30 both Houses of Parliament agreed to another ordinance 'for the better regulation of printing,' imposing heavy penalties on 'what person soever shall make, write, print, publish, sell, or utter any book, pamphlet, treatise, ballad, libel, or sheet of news whatsoever, or cause so to be done, except the same be licensed by both or either House of Parliament, or by such persons as shall be thereunto authorised by one or both Houses of Parliament, with the name of the

¹ Whitelocke, *Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 281.

author, printer, and licencer thereunto prefixed.' And in order that this rule might be carried out, if possible, one Gilbert Mabbott, who had already 'approved himself faithful in the service of licensing and likewise in the service of the houses and the army,' was formally appointed to the office of licencer.

The ordinance of 1647 appears to have had small result. Nedham, by shifting his own places of residence and often changing his printers, contrived to bring out his 'Mercurius Pragmaticus' every week from September 1647 till January 1649, and, after three months' interruption, he started another series in April 1649, which, however, was soon discontinued. Other seditious prints also appeared from time to time, and, after vainly endeavouring through a year and a half to perform his duties as censor, Mabbott abandoned it in disgust, his resignation being accepted by parliament in May 1649. Mabbott's statement of his reasons for retiring are interesting. The first, showing how utterly useless and mischievous was his office, was that 'many thousands of scandalous and malignant pamphlets have been published with his name thereunto as if he had licensed the same, though he never saw them, on purpose, as he conceives, to prejudice him in his reputation amongst the honest party of this nation.' The other reasons show that he was too much of Milton's way of thinking, and too honest and intelligent a man, to be a good press censor. 'That employment, he conceives, is unjust and illegal as to the ends of its first institution, viz. to stop the press from publishing anything that might discover the corruption of church and state in the time of popery, episcopacy, and tyranny, the better to keep the people in ignorance and carry on their popish, factious, and tyrannical designs for the enslaving and destruction both of the bodies and souls

of all the free people of this nation. Licensing is as great a monopoly as ever was in this nation, in that all men's judgments, reasons, &c. are bound up in the licencer's as to licensing : for if the author of any sheet, book, or treatise write not to please the fancy and come within the compass of the licencer's judgment, then he is not to receive any stamp of authority for publishing thereof.' ¹

Mabbott's duties as licencer of books and newspapers in general appear to have included such special responsibility for the contents of the semi-official journals which were published at this time as made him practically their editor. As early as 1642 the 'True Diurnal of Parliamentary Intelligence' had had its weekly information vouched for by the signature of 'Jo. Browne, Cler. Parliamentor.,' and though neither this nor the 'Perfect Diurnal' that succeeded it in 1643 was altogether in the nature of a government gazette, the paper specially favoured by parliament was of course expected to furnish just such information as the authorities wished to have communicated to the public. When General Fairfax proposed the appointment of Mabbott as censor in 1647 he suggested, 'in order that the kingdom's expectation may be satisfied in relation to intelligence till a firm peace be settled, considering the mischiefs that will happen by the poisonous writings of evil men sent abroad daily to abuse and deceive the people, that, if the house shall see fit, some two or three sheets shall come forth weekly, which may be licensed and have some stamp of authority with them ;' and from this date more than before, we may infer, the 'Perfect Diurnal,' under Mabbott's guidance, was the authentic organ of the parliament and the army. It was so yet more after the execution of Charles I. in

¹ *Perfect Diurnal*, May 21-28, 1649.

January 1649 and during the eleven years of the Commonwealth.

Through nearly all those years the versatile Marchmont Nedham was, strange to say, the official journalist. Having abandoned the Parliamentary party or been abandoned by it, and having defied it by the clandestine production of his 'Mercurius Pragmaticus' from September 1647 until Charles I.'s death, he did not long remain faithful to his sovereign's son. The second series of 'Mercurius Pragmaticus,' begun on April 24, 1649, was, it is true, stated on the title to be 'for King Charles II.,' but Nedham's loyalty was soon frightened out of him. 'Being narrowly sought after,' says his biographer, 'he left London, and for a time skulked at Minster Lovel, near Binford in Oxfordshire, in the house of Dr. Peter Heylin. At length, he being found out, imprisoned in Newgate, and brought into danger of his life, Lenthall, the Speaker of the House of Commons, who knew him and his relations well, and John Bradshaw, President of the High Court of Justice, treated him fairly, and not only got his pardon, but, with promise of rewards and places, persuaded him to change his style once more.'¹

The changed style, changed in matter, not in manner, appeared in a new paper, of which the first number was published on Thursday, June 13, 1650, with this title, 'Mercurius Politicus, comprising the Sum of all Intelligence, with the Affairs and Designs now on foot in the Nations of England, Ireland, and Scotland in defence of the Commonwealth and for the Information of the People.' 'Why should not the Commonwealth have a fool as well as the king had?' Nedham frankly asked in his opening article. ''Tis a point of state, and if the old court humours should

¹ Wood, *Athenæ Oxonienses*, vol. iii. p. 1180.

return in this new form, 'twere the ready road to pre-ferment and a lady's chamber. But you'll say I am out of fashion because I make neither rhymes nor faces for fiddler's pay like the royal "Mercurius," yet you shall know I have authority enough to create a fashion of my own and make all the world to follow my humour.'

We must conclude either that the Council of State, which managed the Commonwealth while Cromwell was fighting its battles in Ireland and Scotland, was very scantily supplied with men competent to conduct its official journal, or that Nedham had great influence at the republican court, when we find this shameless turncoat advanced to the post. He occupied it with no little ability, if without much credit, however, for nearly ten years. On May 24, 1650, besides a sum of 50*l.* granted him for arrears, an allowance of 100*l.* a year was made to him 'for service done to the Commonwealth,'¹ and this, equal to about 350*l.* in modern value, was evidently the stipend attached to his duties as editor of 'Mercurius Politicus' and occasional writer of other pamphlets on behalf of the government. He may have received other payments, or a share of the profits from the printer and publisher, but about this there is no information.

During some time, a year or more, Nedham had assistance in his work from a famous man of letters. From January 1651 till January 1652 John Milton, in connection with his employment as one of the secretaries to the Council of State, acted as censor of the press under the Commonwealth, and though there is no proof that the author of 'Areopagitica' himself wrote much or anything for 'Mercurius Politicus,' there are numberless and unmistakable marks of his influence on the tone of its articles and the construction of its

¹ Masson, *Life of Milton*, vol. iv. p. 226.

sentences at this period. Nedham's rollicking style, flippant and abusive, is not abandoned, but subdued, and its rough humour is strangely interspersed with touches of Miltonic grandeur. Along with the gossiping reports of news and rambling comments upon it, moreover, we find, in the year of Milton's censorship, grave and thoughtful articles in 'Mercurius Politicus,' discussing political methods and propounding theories of government in ways that are altogether different from anything to be met with in this or other old newspapers before, and for some time after, the years 1651 and 1652. It is certain, at any rate, that by virtue of their several offices Milton had just then to be in frequent communication with Nedham, and was in a position to control if not to dictate to him.¹

There is nothing to show that Milton, to whom the duties of press censor and book licencer must have been irksome, and on principle offensive, was more tyrannical than it was necessary for him to be during his term of office. If he put a curb on Nedham's scurrilous pen, he seems to have meddled little, perhaps because he could not meddle effectually, with the rival and seditious papers that were still plentiful, though not so numerous as in the times of civil war.

The censorship was more severe after he retired from it. On December 28, 1652, the House of Commons ordered 'that it be referred to the Council of State to take care for suppressing the weekly pamphlets

¹ 'One can imagine through those months,' says Mr. Masson, 'Nedham's weekly visits to the invalid Milton in his Whitehall apartments, bringing the proofs of each forthcoming number of *Mercurius* with him, and their consultations over the articles, and Milton's occasional criticisms and perhaps suggestions and improvements.'—*Life of Milton*, vol. iv. p. 326. In 1656 a series of articles, which had appeared in 1651 in *Mercurius Politicus*, was reprinted anonymously in a volume entitled *The Excellency of a Free State, or the Right Constitution of a Commonwealth*, which might easily pass for a clumsy and inferior work by Milton.

or any other books that go out to the dishonour of the Parliament and prejudice of the Commonwealth, and also to examine the authors, printers, and publishers of the books called "Mercurius Britannicus"—now an anti-Republican paper—and "The Scout"—another seditious journal—or any other books of that nature, and that they have power to imprison the offenders, and to inflict such other punishment on them as they shall think fit; and Mr. Scott—apparently the Major Thomas Scott who was too staunch a Republican for Cromwell—is to take especial care hereof.¹ Harsher, and probably less of a dead letter, was an order of September 5, 1655, on the lord protector's authority, that 'no person whatever do presume to publish in print any matter of public news or intelligence without leave of the secretary of state.'²

During the ensuing three years, at any rate, the press censorship, taken in hand by Secretary Thurloe himself, was a reality, and matters were hardly mended in the time between Oliver Cromwell's death and Charles II.'s instalment as king, when they were to be anything but mended. Under the protectorate there appear to have been only two authorised newspapers, 'Mercurius Politicus' and 'The Public Intelligencer.' This latter, 'communicating the chief occurrences and proceedings within the dominions of England, Scotland, and Ireland, together with an account of affairs from several parts of Europe,' according to the title-page, had been started in the autumn of 1655, and was, indeed, practically a Monday edition of 'Mercurius Politicus,' the publishing day of which was Thursday. Both papers were edited by Nedham, and printed by Thomas Newcombe, 'in Thames Street, over against

¹ *Journals of the House of Commons*, vol. vii. p. 236.

² Masson, *Life of Milton*, vol. v. p. 51.

Baynard's Castle,' whose name appears in the books of the Stationers' Company as the registered proprietor, under licence from Secretary Thurloe.

Time-serving and versatile as he was, Nedham was unable to retain his post after the break-up of the Commonwealth, and he fell into some disgrace with the dominant faction in 1659. On May 13 he was suspended by order of the House of Commons from the management of 'The Public Intelligencer,' though not apparently of 'Mercurius Politicus.' On August 15, however, the House resolved 'that Marchmont Nedham, gentleman, be and is hereby restored to be writer of "The Public Intelligencer" as formerly.'¹ He still had friends in power, perhaps his old patron, Speaker Lenthall, being chief of them, and when, falling in with the change in politics, the two official papers were reshaped in January 1660 with slightly altered titles—'Mercurius Publicus' in the one case, and 'The Parliamentary Intelligencer' in the other—both avowedly 'published by order of the Council of State,' he retained the editorship of both for three months.²

But the crisis came for him, and he was finally dismissed in April 1660, while the Convention Parliament was being elected. In the number of 'The Parliamentary Intelligencer' for April 16 'the reader is desired to take notice that—whereas Marchmont Nedham is, by order of the Council of State, discharged from writing or publishing any public intelligence—by order of the said Council, Giles Dury and Henry

¹ *Journals of the House of Commons*, vol. vii. p. 758.

² Other newspapers were allowed to appear, or could not be prevented from appearing, at this time. One was *An Exact Account of the Daily Proceedings in Parliament, with Occurrences from Foreign Parts*, started in December 1658; another, *A Particular Advice from the Office of Intelligence near the Old Exchange*, started in June 1659, and the title of which was soon altered to *Occurrences from Foreign Parts*.

Muddiman are authorised henceforth to write and publish the said intelligence, the one upon the Thursday and the other upon the Monday, which they do intend to set out under the titles of "The Parliamentary Intelligencer" and "Mercurius Publicus."

Not waiting for the return of Charles II., whom he had known and flattered long before, while he was producing 'Mercurius Pragmaticus,' but whom he had persistently vilified during ten years in 'Mercurius Politicus,' Nedham took shelter for a time in Holland, whither he was pursued, not by armed men but by the mockery of his Royalist contemporaries. A printed squib, 'An Hue and Cry after Mercurius Politicus,' appeared on May 10, describing his antecedents and personal appearance in such terms as these :—

But if at Amsterdam you meet
With one that's purblind in the street,
Hawk-nosed, turn up his hair
And in his ears two holes you'll find,
And, if they are not pawned, behind
Two rings are hanging there.
His visage meagre is, and long,
His body slender, &c.

He was in England again in October 1660, however, having, we are told, 'for money given to an hungry courtier, obtained pardon under the great seal, which was his defence oftentimes against several attempts to hale him before a justice, and so to prison for treason.' His career as a journalist was over ; but, having studied medicine as well as law in his youth, 'he exercised the faculty of physic to his dying day, which was a considerable benefit to him.' He died in 1674, four years after Milton, his senior by twelve years, and his sometime associate in Commonwealth journalism. Even his spiteful biographer and political opponent was constrained to admit that 'he was a

person endowed with quick natural parts, was a good humanitarian, poet, and born droll, and, had he been constant to his cavaliering principles, he would have been beloved by and admired of all; but, being mercenary and valuing money and sordid interest, rather than conscience, friendship, or love to his prince, he was much hated by the Royal party to his last, and many cannot yet endure to have him spoken of.'¹

In his days, and with his help, faulty as it was, journalism had made important progress, and acquired far more dignity and influence than were allowed to it in the generation following.

¹ Wood, *Athenæ Oxonienses*, vol. iii. p. 1180.

CHAPTER II.

UNDER THE LICENSING ACT.

1660—1695.

WHEN the art of printing began in Europe all literature was either in the hands of the clergy or under the Church's immediate management, and during at least a century none but outrageous lawbreakers thought of disputing or meddling with the ecclesiastical prerogative. In England, the authority of popes and cardinals being repudiated by Henry VIII., he claimed like power for himself and his ministers, and the royal right to absolute control over the press was taken for granted, or angrily insisted upon as often as it was questioned or controverted, down to the time when the Commonwealth usurped the functions of the Crown. An ordinance of the Star Chamber in 1585, denouncing the 'enormities and abuses of disorderly persons possessing the art of printing and selling books,' which had been growing during half a century, limited the number of master printers to twenty, besides the establishments allowed to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, placed these and everything issued from their presses under stringent supervision, and made penal all other printing or publishing. Nothing was to be put to press without previous licence of the archbishop of Canterbury or the bishop of London, except what was ordered of the queen's printer, or legal matter

appointed by the chief justices, and inquisitorial powers over printers and booksellers were assigned to the Stationers' Company. This ordinance prevailed, or was violated at peril, until 1637, when the harsher ordinance of the Star Chamber already referred to was published; and before and after that date there was cruel persecution of many producers of books, with great hindrance to the producers of newspapers, though these latter rarely brought on themselves such sufferings as were heroically borne by Prynne, Bastwick, Burton, Lilburn and others. The fall of the Star Chamber in 1641, as we have seen, liberated the press to some extent, and the milder tyranny of the Long Parliament and the Commonwealth leaders was not searching or capable enough to prevent a very considerable growth of newspaper enterprise while Charles I. was being held at bay and Charles II. was kept out of his kingdom. With the Restoration, however, press censorship was restored, and, for some time and to some extent, it was more disastrous in its effects, on newspapers at any rate, than it had been before the interregnum began.

Charles II. was on the throne nearly two years before he and his ministers were able to get their way. A bill for the regulation of printing, as adopted by the House of Lords, was rejected by the Commons in July 1661. But the Licensing Act passed on May 19, 1662, renewed most of the obnoxious provisions of the Star Chamber ordinances of 1585 and 1637. On the plea that 'by the general licentiousness of the late times many evil-disposed persons had been encouraged to print and sell heretical and seditious books,' it again limited the number of master printers to twenty, all of whom were to be in London, except one in York and those employed by the crown and the universities; it

assigned the licensing of all historical works and political writings to the secretary of state, of all legal works to the lord chancellor and the judges, and of all works on religion, philosophy, and physics to the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London ; and it threw on these ecclesiastics the task of seeing that the Stationers' Company and other responsible bodies did their duty, and that all unlicensed printers and writers of unlicensed books and pamphlets were severely punished. This act, frequently renewed, was in force till 1679, when worse tyranny than it sanctioned began to be carried on without parliamentary authority. Revived in 1685, it continued in operation till 1695. Of its disastrous effects during more than thirty years some evidence may now be given.

The spirit that prompted it began to work before the Act itself was passed. There was less immediate change than might have been expected, however, in the style of the authorised newspapers. Marchmont Nedham, having been dismissed in April 1660, both 'The Parliamentary Intelligencer' and 'Mercurius Publicus' were continued pretty much as heretofore till the end of the year by Henry Muddiman and Giles Dury, of whom we know very little, and who were probably employed merely as stopgaps.¹ Nedham's real successor was his old rival of the early period of the civil wars, John Birkenhead ; and Birkenhead soon gave place to a sterner censor.

Birkenhead had had many experiences since the time when he started 'Mercurius Aulicus.' For the skill and scurrility shown by him in his conduct of that court organ Charles I. had, somewhat inconsequentially, got him appointed to the chair of moral philo-

¹ Pepys said of Muddiman that he was 'a good scholar and an arch rogue.'

sophy at Oxford university; but in 1648 he was deprived by the Presbyterian visitors both of this post and of his All Souls fellowship, and after that, we are told, 'he retired to London, suffered several imprisonments for his majesty's cause, and lived by his wits at helping young gentlemen at dead lifts in making poems, songs, and epistles on and to their respective mistresses, as also in translating and writing several little things, and other petty employments.'¹ Better fortune and more sedate occupation came to him with the Restoration. In November 1660 he was appointed one of the licensers under the Clarendon ministry, apparently with particular oversight of the authorised newspapers, into which, however, he was either not allowed or not inclined to import any of the 'wit and buffoonery' in which he had indulged seventeen years before.²

On the first Monday in January 1661 'The Parliamentary Intelligencer' came out with an altered title, as 'The Kingdom's Intelligencer of the Affairs now in agitation in England, Scotland, and Ireland, together with Foreign Intelligence; to prevent False News; published by authority;' and the first paragraph announced that 'the Parliamentary Intelligencer (as he has good reason) hath changed his name, the parliament itself (from whom he borrowed that compilation) being now dissolved, though 'tis not in the power of malice or folly to misname that parliament since his majesty hath pleased with his own sacred lips to call it the healing and the blessed parliament.' It was followed on Thursday by 'Mercurius Publicus,' also 'to prevent false news,' and 'published by authority,' with a fresh No. 1. Each paper extended to sixteen

¹ Wood, *Athenæ Oxonienses*, vol. iii. p. 1203.

² Birkenhead is described by Aubrey as a man 'of middling stature, great goggle eyes, and not of a sweet aspect.'

small quarto pages, generally in large print, and—portions of the matter in each being repeated in its successor, so that buyers of only one series might have as much weekly information as was thought good for them—furnished very little news, either true or false. The first number of 'The Kingdom's Intelligencer,' for instance, contained a few scraps of foreign and domestic gossip, a bald catalogue of the acts passed by the Convention Parliament just dissolved, and the text or substance of Sir Harbottle Grimston's address, as Speaker of the House, dissolving it on behalf of King Charles. There were also in the number two trade advertisements, this novelty in journalism having been introduced a few years before in the Commonwealth newspapers.¹

Meagre as were the papers allowed to appear during the first three years of Charles II.'s reign, they were larger and fuller than the authorities desired, and to Birkenhead a stricter successor in the control of them was found. Birkenhead seems to have retained his office while the Licensing Act was being forced through parliament, and for fifteen months after. But he was busy and prospering in other ways. Through royal favour he was made Doctor of Civil Law by Oxford university in April 1661, and member of parliament for Wilton in the following May. He was knighted in November 1662, and in 1663 he was appointed Master of Requests, with a good salary and chance of pickings without limit.²

¹ One of the two advertisements is curious enough to be worth quoting: 'Sir Kenelm Digby's sympathetical powder, prepared by Promethian fire, curing all green wounds that come within the compass of a remedy, as also the toothache infallibly, is to be had at Mr. Samuel Speed's, at the Printing-press in St. Paul's Churchyard.' This earlier one had appeared in the *Mercurius Politicus* of September 30, 1658: 'That excellent and by all physicians approved China drink, called by the Chineans *tea*, by other nations "tay" alias "tee," is sold at the Sultanness' Head Coffee-house in Sweeting's Rents, by the Royal Exchange, London.'

² Wood, *Athenæ Oxonienses*, vol. iii. p. 1206.

Therefore he made way in the licensing office for Roger L'Estrange.

This L'Estrange, born in 1616, had been a zealous fighter and schemer for Charles I., had been caught and sentenced to death as a spy and conspirator against the Parliament in 1644, but had escaped with four years' imprisonment in Newgate, after which he had passed a restless life, partly on the continent, partly in England, until the Restoration brought him into favour. One of many pamphlets written by him in Commonwealth times was a fierce attack on Milton, entitled 'No Blind Guides;' another was 'Treason arraigned in answer to Plain Speech,' the 'plain speech' there denounced having, as he said, been at first regarded by him as 'either Nedham's or Milton's, a couple of curs of the same pack.'¹ In June 1663, evidently with a view to bringing himself into notice, he published another pamphlet, 'Considerations and Proposals in order to the Regulation of the Press, together with divers Instances of Treasonous and Seditious Pamphlets, proving the Necessity thereof.' In this treatise L'Estrange complained that the Licensing Act, which had been passed a year before, was by no means so stringently enforced as it might be. 'That spirit of hypocrisy, scandal, malice, error, and illusion that actuated the late rebellion,' he said, was 'reigning still, and working not only by the same means, but in very many of the same persons and to the same ends;' and there was no hope of its being repressed unless the severest measures were adopted, not only towards printers and authors, but also towards 'the letter-founders, and the smiths and joiners that work upon presses, with the stitchers, binders, stationers, hawkers, mercury women, pedlars, ballad-singers, posts, carriers, hackney coachmen, boatmen, and mariners.'

¹ Masson, *Life of Milton*, vol. vi. p. 326.

Besides such 'ordinary penalties' for the issuing of treasonable or seditious literature as 'death, mutilation, imprisonment, banishment, corporal pains, disgrace, pecuniary mulcts,' he thought that the humbler offenders—the mercury women, hawkers, and so forth—ought to be 'condemned to wear some visible badge or mark of ignominy, as a halter instead of a hatband, one stocking blue and another red, a blue bonnet with a T or S upon it.' The upshot of all the complaining and proposing was that competent and duly-paid press licencers ought to be appointed, and that informers should be well bribed to bring offenders to justice.

Roger L'Estrange's pamphlet promptly had the result that he doubtless chiefly desired. In August 1663 he was appointed 'surveyor of the imprimery and printing presses,' and to him was assigned 'the sole licensing of all ballads, sheets, printed portraitures, printed pictures, books, and papers,' except such as had already been arranged for, and also 'all the sole privilege of writing, printing, and publishing all narratives, advertisements, mercuries, intelligencers, diurnals, and other books of public intelligence, and printing of all ballads, plays, maps, charts, portraitures, and pictures, not previously printed, and all briefs for collections, play-bills, quack-salvers' bills, customs and excise bills, post-office bills, creditors' bills and tickets, in England and Wales, and with power to search for and seize unlicensed and treasonable, schismatical, and scandalous books and papers.'¹ In plain words he was constituted censor in general of all printed or printable matter coming within the purview of the secretary of state under the Licensing Act, head of a sort of 'criminal investigation department' for the hunting down of all unlicensed literature and all its

¹ Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. iv. p. 54.

producers and distributors, and sole monopolist of the entire trade of journalism throughout England and Wales. Of those functions he formally retained as many and so much as he could down to 1688, and he exercised them vigorously for some time.

In August 1663, 'The Kingdom's Intelligencer' and 'Mercurius Publicus,' which may or may not have been edited up till then by Muddiman and Dury, or by one of them, with or without the real or nominal supervision of Birkenhead, were discontinued. Their places were taken by 'The Intelligencer, published for the Satisfaction and Information of the People, with Privilege,' the first number of which appeared on Monday, August 31, and 'The News, published for the Satisfaction and Information of the People, with Privilege,' the first number of which appeared on Thursday, September 3. Reduced in size to eight small pages apiece, half the size of their predecessors, these two papers furnished between them all the information which Charles II.'s subjects were privileged to get, and with which they had to be satisfied, unless they could supplement them by written newsletters, which now came into fashion again, or by such stray publications as were issued in defiance of the law and were generally of a very coarse quality.

More than half of the first number of 'The Intelligencer,' the rest comprising two and a half pages of foreign news and one page of advertisements, was occupied with L'Estrange's prospectus of his new undertaking. 'His majesty,' as he said, 'having been lately and graciously pleased to commit the privilege of publishing all intelligence, together with the survey and inspection of the press, to one and the same person,' he thus explicitly declared his views and intentions: 'As to the point of intelligence, I do declare myself (as I hope I may in a matter left so absolutely indifferent, whether

any or none), that, supposing the press in order, the people in their right wits, and news or no news to be the question, a public mercury should never have my vote ; because I think it makes the multitude too familiar with the actions and counsels of their superiors, too pragmatistical and censorious, and gives them not only an itch, but a kind of colourable right and licence, to be meddling with the government. All which (supposing as before supposed) does not yet hinder but that in this juncture a paper of that quality may be both safe and expedient—truly if I should say necessary perhaps the case would bear it, for certainly there is not anything which at this instant more imports his majesty's service and the public than to redeem the vulgar from their former mistakes and delusions, and to preserve them from the like for the time to come ; to both which purposes the prudent management of a gazette may contribute in a very high degree. For, besides that it is everybody's money, and in truth a great part of most men's study and business, it is none of the worst ways of address to the genius and humour of the common people, whose affections are much more capable of being tuned and wrought upon by convenient touches in the shape and air of a pamphlet than by the strongest reason and best notions imaginable under any other and more sober form whatsoever. To which advantages of being popular and grateful must be added, as none of the least, that it is likewise reasonable and worth the while, were there no other use of it than only to detect and disappoint the malice of those scandalous and false reports which are daily contrived and bruited against the government.'

L'Estrange hoped, at starting, that 'once a week may do the business, for I intend to utter my news by weight and not by measure,' whence it would appear that the

publication of 'The News,' as a Thursday sequel to Monday's 'Intelligencer,' was an afterthought; but if so, he was quickly led to act on his announcement that, 'if I shall find, when my hand is in, and after the planting and securing of my correspondents, that the matter will fairly furnish more, without either uncertainty, repetition, or impertinence, I shall keep myself free to double at pleasure.' He did 'double' in his opening week, and even then had none too much space for the news the public might have been glad to receive, though much of the news he gave was hardly worth printing. Here is a specimen paragraph from the Bath correspondent's letter of August 29, in the second number of 'The Intelligencer':—'His majesty dined with Sir John Talbot [at Newbury], and thence marched to Bath, where their majesties, attended by divers eminent persons, and all the maids of honour, entered the town on horseback, to the abundant satisfaction of the people, who had thereby the blessing of so illustrious and divine a prospect.'

In his prospectus L'Estrange gave some account of his licensing and inquisitorial plans in general, as well as of his own editorial ideal. He had discovered that there were far more printers in London than the law allowed, and than in his opinion there was legitimate occupation for. 'I find it in general, with the printers as with their neighbours, there are too many of the trade to live by one another. But more particularly I find them clogged with three sorts of people—foreigners, persons not free of the trade, and separatists; and in the retrenchment he contemplated, he said, 'the reformation may begin there.' He invited all honest citizens to help him in his reforming work. Whoever brought him information leading to proof about 'any printing-press erected and being in any private place, hole or

corner, contrary to the tenor of the late act of parliament,' should receive a reward of forty shillings, 'with what assurance of secrecy himself shall desire.' To anyone who gave similar proof of a seditious and unlicensed book being in the press, and rendered 'his aid to the seizing of the copies and the offenders,' he offered a reward of five pounds, and, among other bribes, one of five shillings was proposed to anyone helping to convict the hawker of an unlicensed book, pamphlet, or newspaper. All promiscuous selling of books and papers was obnoxious to him. 'The way as to the vent that has been found most beneficial to the master of the book has been to cry and expose it about the streets by mercuries and hawkers;' but as 'under countenance of that employment is carried on the private trade of treasonous and seditious libels,' L'Estrange declared his intention of putting a stop to it. Even 'The Intelligencer' or 'The News,' if anyone desired to buy a copy, must be procured from the printing and publishing office or from an accredited and respectable agent.

L'Estrange, while carrying on his newspaper monopoly, did his utmost to enforce his threats as 'surveyor of the imprimery and printing presses.' It is on record that one October evening in 1663, acting on information he had received, he proceeded with four assistants to the house of a seditious printer named Twyn in Cloth Fair. According to one of the assistants' evidence, 'they knocked at least half an hour before they got in,' it being long past midnight, and while they waited they 'heard some papers tumbling down and heard a rattling above.' Admitted at length, they were in time to seize some type that had been broken up and some sheets which had not been destroyed, and which set forth in black and white, among

other political heresies, the monstrous doctrine that 'the execution of judgment and justice is as well the people's as the magistrate's duty, and if the magistrates prevent judgment, the people are bound by the law of God to execute judgment without them and upon them.'

Here was ample occasion for arraigning Twyn before the King's Bench. Twyn's apprentice being one of the witnesses against him, he admitted that he had undertaken to print the pamphlet, which he 'thought was mettlesome stuff, but knew no hurt in it,' for a sum of forty shillings, and in excuse he urged his poverty and the need of earning money to procure bread for his family. The jury found him guilty. 'I humbly beg mercy,' exclaimed Twyn. 'I am a poor man and have three small children.' 'I'll tell you what you shall do,' said Chief Justice Hyde; 'ask mercy of them that can give it, that is of God and the king.' 'I humbly beseech you to intercede with his majesty for mercy,' Twyn murmured. 'Tie him up, executioner!' shouted the judge. 'I speak it from my soul, I think we have the greatest happiness in the world in enjoying what we do under so gracious and good a king; and you, Twyn, in the rancour of your heart thus to abuse him, deserve no mercy.' An example should be made of men who thus advocated disobedience to such a monarch; and the sentence passed on Twyn accordingly was that he be hanged by the neck, cut down before he was dead, shamefully mutilated, and his entrails taken out; 'and, you still living, the same to be burnt before your eyes, your head to be cut off, and your head and quarters to be disposed of at the pleasure of the king's majesty.' 'I humbly beseech your lordship,' the printer cried again, 'to remember my condition and intercede for me.' 'I would not intercede for my own father in

this case if he were alive,' was the judge's rejoinder. Twyn was therefore led back to Newgate and hurried thence to Tyburn, where the main portion of the sentence was carried out, his head and the fragments of his body being afterwards set up 'on Ludgate, Aldersgate, and the other gates of the city.'¹

Other victims in abundance, though none of them quite so cruelly used, were found for Chief Justice Hyde and other judges during many years by L'Estrange in his capacity of persecutor of printers and suppressor of seditious books, but his career as newspaper monopolist was brief.

When in the autumn of 1665 Charles II. sought shelter in Oxford from the Great Plague, he and his courtiers wanted newspapers to read, yet feared to touch 'The Intelligencer' or 'The News,' which, coming from London, might be infected. Therefore Leonard Litchfield, the university printer, was authorised or ordered to bring out a local paper. On Tuesday, November 14, the first number of 'The Oxford Gazette' appeared, and it was continued afterwards through eleven weeks on Thursdays and Mondays. It was meagre enough, but, though comprised in only two double-columned pages of folio, each number contained nearly as much matter as one of L'Estrange's papers, and it soon became a formidable rival to those papers, especially as Thomas Newcombe, the old printer of the Commonwealth organs, was allowed to reproduce its sheets in London 'for the use of some members and gentlemen who desired them.' How angry L'Estrange was at this competition and overriding of his privilege may be inferred from the fact that on Tuesday, November 28, he brought out the first number of a 'Public Intelligence,' matching 'The Oxford Gazette' in size, with

¹ *State Trials*, vol. vi. p. 539.

this preface : ' You may perceive, my masters, that your 'Intelligencer' has changed his title, his form, and his day, for which I could give you twenty shrewd reasons if I were not more obliged to gratify a point of prudence in myself than a curiosity in others, and I do assure you there is both discretion and modesty in the case. This short account will satisfy the wise, and I shall leave the rest to content themselves at leisure.'

We can imagine the quarrelling and heartburning that must have occurred over this business. L'Estrange was not a man to yield meekly to interference with his 'rights.' But he had to yield now, and the issue of the turmoil was that, the new 'Intelligence' dying in its infancy, and the old 'News' being soon discontinued—the plague, moreover, being over and King Charles being back at Whitehall—'The Oxford Gazette' was succeeded by 'The London Gazette,' which made its first appearance, labelled as No. 24, on February 5, 1666, and which has kept alive, altering its size and character from time to time, down to this day.

When it started it was only an ordinary newspaper, furnishing very little news, and that not always or often accurate, but treating in its way of whatever was thought to be interesting or safe reading for the public. From the first, however, it was more strictly an official organ than any of the older 'Diurnals,' 'Mercuries,' or 'Intelligencers' had been. Its Oxford pioneer having apparently been edited by Henry Muddiman, we are told that after a few numbers had appeared 'Mr. Joseph Williamson, under secretary of state, procured the writing of them for himself, and thereupon employed Charles Perrot, M.A., and fellow of Oriel College in Oxon, who had a good command of his pen, to do that office under him, and so he did, though not con-

stantly, to about 1671.'¹ Except in its emptiness and worthlessness there was nothing notable about 'The London Gazette' in these or later years.²

Yet, such as it was, it was almost the only newspaper allowed to Charles II.'s subjects till near the end of his reign. A few ribald sheets, licentious but not trenching on forbidden ground, passed the censorship, and appeared from time to time; but these were crude and coarse forerunners of the magazines rather than newspapers, and everything in the nature of political information or controversy was sternly repressed by the licensors. Though L'Estrange had been ousted from the official editorship, he was still licencer of papers, and therefore able to prohibit them. The only important paper during ten years, indeed, except 'The London Gazette,' and hardly a rival to it, was a speculation of the licencer himself. 'The City Mercury, or Advertisements concerning Trade,' started in November 1675, was, as its title announced, a trade organ. It bore this business-like announcement: 'Advertisements received at the Intelligence Offices, upon the Royal Exchange, and next door to the Pigeon Tavern, near Charing Cross. Complaints rectified on application to Mr. Roger L'Estrange, in Gifford's Buildings, Holborn.'

In the same category, but of later date, must be placed a humbler paper, depending on advertisements alone for its profits, a 'Domestic Intelligence,' 'published gratis for the promoting of trade,' which was begun in 1679 by Nathaniel Thompson, and also a precursor of literary journals, 'Mercurius Librarius, or a

¹ Wood, *Athenæ Oxonienses*, vol. iii. p. 1185.

² For a long time, down to 1696 at any rate, a version of the *Gazette* was issued in French—*Gazette de Londres*, 'publiée avec privilège.' In 1678, as appears by the Commons' Journals, the printer got into trouble by mistranslating an important passage about popish recusants.

Faithful Account of all Books and Pamphlets,' which appeared in 1680. 'All booksellers that approve of the design of publishing this catalogue weekly, or once in fourteen days at least,' it was said in the first number of 'Mercurius Librarius,' 'are desired to send in to one of the undertakers any book, pamphlet, or sheet they would have in it, so soon as published, that they may be inserted in order as they come out. Their books shall be delivered them back again upon demand. To show they design the public advantage of the trade, they will expect but sixpence for inserting any book, nor but twelpence for any other advertisement relating to the trade, unless it be excessive long.' The booksellers' trade was not brisk enough to supply many of the coveted advertisements, and of course no criticism of books was offered in 'Mercurius Librarius.'

The somewhat greater liberty accorded to printers and authors in the later years of Charles II. was partly due to the growth of public opinion, and partly to the lapsing, for a time, of the Licensing Act itself, consequent on the same cause. There was no extension of liberty to political writers opposed to the dominant party, however, and the cessation of the Licensing Act only resulted in an outburst of worse tyranny. The short parliament of 1679, dominated by John Locke's friend, the first Earl of Shaftesbury, which passed the Habeas Corpus Act, and which was dismissed in order to prevent the threatened passing of the Exclusion Bill, had no chance of refusing to renew the expiring Licensing Act, as it would certainly have done; but the parliamentary strength of those who now began to be called Whigs by no means lessened the zeal or weakened the power of the courtiers, henceforth to be styled Tories, who ruled the bench, and from it overawed the country.

On May 12, 1680, just a year after Charles II. had begun to imitate his father's attempts to govern without a parliament, appeared a proclamation 'for suppressing the printing and publishing of unlicensed newsbooks and pamphlets of news.' 'Whereas,' it announced, 'it is of great importance to the state that all news printed and published to the people, as well concerning foreign as domestic affairs, should be agreeable to truth, or at least warranted by good intelligence, that the minds of his majesty's subjects may not be disturbed or amused by lies or vain reports, which are many times raised on purpose to scandalise the government, or for other indirect ends; and whereas of late many evil-disposed persons have made it a common practice to print and publish pamphlets of news without licence or authority, and therein have vended to his majesty's people all the idle and malicious reports that they could collect or invent, contrary to law, the continuance whereof would, in a short time, endanger the peace of the kingdom, the same manifestly tending thereto, as has been declared by all his majesty's judges unanimously; his majesty, therefore, considering the great mischief that may ensue upon such licentious and illegal practices, if not timely prevented, hath thought fit, with the advice of his privy council, strictly to prohibit and forbid all persons whatsoever to print or publish any newsbooks or pamphlets of news not licensed by his majesty's authority.'¹ That was clearly an usurpation by the crown of powers which, formerly conferred upon it by parliament, had lapsed in theory and in law; and for having had a leading hand in recommending it Chief Justice Scroggs was impeached in 1681.²

¹ *London Gazette*, May 17, 1680.

² *State Trials*, vol. vii. p. 1127; vol. viii. pp. 184 and 197.

The immediate occasion of this royal and judicial lawlessness was the appearance of an especially obnoxious article in a Protestant newspaper, 'The Weekly Packet of Advice from Rome,' which had contrived, in defiance of the Licensing Act, to issue its first number in December 1678, and had continued to expose and attack the machinations of the Duke of York, afterwards King James II., and his partisans. The article in question, which appeared in April 1680, was in this style: 'There is lately found out by an experienced physician an incomparable medicament called the wonder-working plaister, truly Catholic in operation, somewhat of kin to the Jesuits' powder, but more effectual. The virtues of it are strange and various. It will make justice deaf as well as blind,' &c. For writing or publishing it Henry Carr, 'of the parish of St. Sepulchre, gentleman,' the conductor of 'The Weekly Packet,' was arraigned at Guildhall before Chief Justice Scroggs, Mr. Recorder Jeffreys being the prosecuting counsel. Though Stevens, the printer, refused to give criminating evidence, and though Sir Francis Winnington, the defendant's counsel, urged that there was no proof of authorship, the judge made short work of the trial. 'You see what a case we are in, gentlemen,' he exclaimed to the jury; 'you see what a sort of people we are got among!' Then he laid it down as 'law,' that, 'to print or publish any newsbook or pamphlet of news whatsoever is illegal; it is a manifest intent to the breach of the peace.' 'If so be that printers and booksellers will undertake to print news foolishly they ought to be punished, and shall be punished if they do it without authority, though there is nothing reflecting on the government, as an unlawful thing.' 'You do not swear,' he added, 'nor are you bound to swear here, that he was the

publisher of the book, but if you find him guilty you only swear you believe it so.' The jury, less compliant than most in those days, spent an hour in arriving at a verdict of guilty and earning Scroggs's praise, 'You have done like honest men!'¹

What sentence was passed on Carr, or what punishment he endured, is not recorded. Probably he recanted, for we are told of him that 'after King James II. came to the crown, he was drawn over so far by the Roman Catholic party, for bread and money's sake, and nothing else, to write on their behalf, and to vindicate their proceedings against the Church of England in his mercuries, which weekly came out, entitled "Public Occurrences Truly Stated."'²

There were many other state trials in these evil days for 'unlicensed printing.' Some victims escaped with fines, others were imprisoned or put in the pillory; but though the motives and intentions of the authorities were as tyrannical as they could have been in the darkest period of Star Chamber rule, or as they were when L'Estrange, still a licencer and now Sir Roger, was fresh in office, and when Twyn was hanged, mutilated, and quartered, less judicial murder and actual torture of condemned offenders were ventured upon. The motives and intentions, however, were none the less reprehensible because they were partly impotent and wholly contemptible, and all the contempt the authorities brought upon themselves was not enough to render them quite impotent. The six years during which Charles II. and his minions did not dare to seek renewal of the Licensing Act were ugly years. The

¹ *State Trials*, vol. vii. pp. 1111-1130.

² Wood, *Athenæ Oxonienses*. Wood speaks of him as Henry Cave, evidently an error, as the 'certain scribbler, in his *Weekly Packet of Advice from Rome*,' referred to by Wood, can only have been Carr.

impeachment of Scroggs, for advising the proclamation of 1680, for ordering unlawful search after what were pretended to be unlawful publications and their producers, and for other treasons against equity and morality, fell through, and the threat of it only led to his dismissal; and Chief Justice Scroggs was succeeded after a year's interval by Chief Justice Jeffreys. Matters were worse under James II. than under Charles II., and not mended all at once when William of Orange came over to try his hand at righting them. Yet lessons in liberty, in the ways of winning it and in the ways of using it, were being slowly and painfully learnt, for which we who live in happier times and who profit by their misfortunes should not be ungrateful to the luckless pioneers who caused them to be taught.¹

Unable, with their utmost violence, to prevent the publication of all obnoxious newspapers, either in the year before or in the few years after the lapsing of the Licensing Act, King Charles and his ministers allowed and encouraged the appearance of journals friendly to them, and they even sought by banter, and what purported to be argument, to curb the rebellious spirit that their terrorism could not frighten. 'Heraclitus Ridens, or a Discourse between Jest and Earnest, where many a True Word is pleasantly spoken in Opposition to Libellers against the Government,' was an authorised comic weekly which was begun in February 1681 and continued till August 1682; and a more important ministerial organ, offering criticism on news instead of

¹ See the *Journals of the House of Commons*, the *State Trials*, the newspapers of the day, and other contemporary matter. Hallam devoted a few pages to the subject in the thirteenth chapter of his *Constitutional History*; but strangely little has been said on it by modern writers, even by Macaulay.

news itself, was 'The Observator,' started by Sir Roger L'Estrange in April 1681.

Still a zealous paid servant of the government, though his functions as licencer and 'surveyor of imprimery and printing presses' were legally in abeyance, L'Estrange did what he could to earn his money. 'My business,' he said in the first number of 'The Observator,' 'is to encounter the faction and to vindicate the government, to detect their'—meaning only the faction's—'forgeries, to lay open the rankness of their calumnies and malice, to refute their seditious doctrines, to expose their hypocrisy and the bloody design that is carried on under the name and semblance of religion, and, in short, to lift up the cloak of the true Protestant (as he christens himself) and to show the people the Jesuit that lies skulking under it.' 'The Observator' was not to be a weekly paper, but to appear 'oftener or seldomer as I see occasion.' As it happened, it was issued twice a week at first, and afterwards three or sometimes four numbers were printed every week, each in two folio pages of the size of 'The Gazette;' and it was kept up with some cleverness till the eve of the Revolution.¹ It was written in 'question and answer'—that is, in the form of a desultory debate or controversy between a typical Whig and a typical Tory. As a matter of course, all the wisdom and virtue were on the side of the Tory; but we see clear evidence of the dire extremity in which the Stuart party now found itself, in the fact that so hot-headed and unscrupulous a champion of despotism as L'Estrange deemed it necessary to make even a pretence of arguing with his foes. That

¹ 'In 1687,' says Wood, 'he was obliged to lay down *The Observator*, as he could not agree with the toleration proposed by his majesty [James II.], though in all other respects he had gone the utmost lengths.'

he did this grudgingly, and without change from his old prejudice against public discussion or enlightenment, is clear enough. 'Tis one thing in the house, another in the press,' he said in one of his numbers; 'and there are many cases that may be fairly enough agitated in a regular debate that may yet be of pernicious consequence in the exposure of them to the people. I have observed very ill effects many times from the ordinary written papers of parliament news by making the coffee-houses and all the popular clubs judges of those counsels and deliberations which they have nothing to do withal.'¹

The coffee-houses thus referred to had by this time become formidable centres of political discussion and agencies for the spread of political information. To them resorted all who were interested in public affairs, and not able to buy the newspapers for themselves, or not satisfied with the small information and unsafe guidance they found in them.² There were Tory coffee-houses as well as Whig coffee-houses, at which rival partisans not only read and talked over the printed papers, but furnished one another with fuller details than the papers contained, and often got sight of the news-letters which, as in the days before newspapers began, were now widely circulated. So it was in London, and so, too, in the provincial towns which

¹ *The Observer*, March 21, 1684.

² As far back as 1663 an old versifier, who objected both to coffee-shops and to newspapers, complained of—

These less than coffee's self, these coffee men,
 These sons of nothing, that can hardly make
 Their broth for laughing how the jest doth take,
 Yet grin and give ye, for the vine's pure blood,
 A loathsome potion not yet understood—
 Syrup of soot, or essence of old shoes,
 Dashed with diurnals or the book of news.

Andrews, *History of British Journalism*, vol. i. p. 64.

were dependent on London for nearly all their news. Roger North tells us of his brother John, who was Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and who died in 1682, that 'whilst he was at Jesus College, coffee was not of such common use as afterwards, and coffee-houses but young. At that time, and long after, there was but one, kept by one Kirk. The trade of news also was scarce set up; for they had only the public "Gazette" till Kirk got a written news-letter circulated by one Muddiman. But now the case is much altered, for it is become a custom, after chapel, to repair to one or other of the coffee-houses, for there are divers, where hours are spent in talking, and less profitable reading of newspapers, of which swarms are continually supplied from London. And the scholars are so greedy after news, which is none of their business, that they neglect all for it; and it is become very rare for any of them to go directly to his chamber after prayers without doing his suit at the coffee-house, which is a vast loss of time.'¹

'So fond are men in these days,' Chief Justice Scroggs complained, when he was trying Henry Carr for his article in 'The Weekly Packet,' 'that when they will deny their children a penny for bread, they will lay it out for a pamphlet; and the temptations are so great that no man can keep twopence in his pocket because of the news.'² Against this appetite, and the political turmoil which caused it and by which it was increased, no tyranny could prevail. In spite of the efforts of unscrupulous judges and courtly politicians to establish a more grinding despotism without the Licensing Act than had been maintained under it, several unlicensed newspapers were circulated, and com-

¹ *Life of Dr. John North*; see also Roger North's *Examiner*, p. 133.

² *State Trials*, vol. vii. p. 1120.

peted successfully with the authorised journals, during the last years of Charles II.'s reign.

It was different in the three and a half disastrous years in which James II. was allowed to occupy the throne. The Licensing Act was promptly revived for a term of seven years from 1685, and thus gave a form of legality to the persecution which the king and such agents as Kirke and Jeffreys were quite ready to indulge in without any excuse in law. Newspaper history, therefore, throughout this dismal period is almost a blank. Such journals as were sanctioned by the authorities continued to be published, giving even more meagrely and partially than heretofore so much news as those authorities deemed suitable for public reading, but it does not appear that a single fresh paper was started, and the men who were brought to trial and punished by Judge Jeffreys and others under the Licensing Act were writers of books, like Richard Baxter and Samuel Johnson, the theologian, not writers of newspapers.

Happier times began when James was deposed and William of Orange accepted as king. On December 12, 1688, the very day after James's flight, three new papers were started, 'The Universal Intelligencer,' 'The English Currant,' and 'The London Courant.' 'The London Mercury' followed on the 18th, and 'The Orange Gazette' on the 31st, 'The London Intelligencer' being added to the list on January 15, 1689. None of these, nor others which began to be issued shortly afterwards, call for much notice. Most of them were bald records of news, differing little in matter from 'The London Gazette,' with which they corresponded in size.¹ They are interesting, however, as evidence that,

¹ Two papers of this period call for mention. One was *The Athenian Mercury* (called *The Athenian Gazette* in the first number), started in March 1690 by John Dunton, an eccentric printer, who tells us in his

though the legal restrictions on a free press were still in existence, these were by no means so stringently

Life and Errors (p. 248) that it was intended 'to open the avenue, raise the soul, and restore the knowledge of truth and happiness that had wandered so long unknown and found out by few.' A sort of seventeenth-century *Notes and Queries*, dealing with philosophical or fanciful, instead of with antiquarian matters, *The Athenian Mercury* was issued weekly till February 1696, when Dunton converted it into a quarterly magazine, on the ground that 'as the coffee-houses have the Votes every day and nine newspapers every week,' there was hardly room for his periodical, although he designed 'to continue it again as a weekly paper as soon as the glut of news is a little over.' The other paper was *A Collection for the Improvement of Husbandry and Trade*, commenced in 1692 by John Houghton, F.R.S., and continued till 1703, which gave information and advice on various subjects, but which soon came to be especially an advertising channel, the editor constituting himself in a curious way an intermediary between his advertisers and his readers. Here are some specimens of his announcements: 'I have met with a curious gardener, that will furnish anybody that sends to me for fruit trees and floral shrubs and garden seeds. I have made him promise, with all solemnity, that whatever he sends me shall be purely good, and I verily believe he may be depended on.' 'If any want all kinds of necessaries for corpse and funerals, I can help to one who does assure me he will use them kindly; and whoever can keep their corpse till they get to London, and have a coffin set down, may have them afterwards kept any reasonable time.' 'If any divine or their relicts have complete sets of manuscript sermons upon the Epistles and Gospels, the Catechisms or Festivals, I can help to a customer.' 'Mr. David Rose, chirurgeon and man-midwife, lives at the first brick house on the right in Gun Yard, Houndsditch, near Aldgate, London. I have known him these twenty years.' 'If any want a wet-nurse, I can help them, as I am informed, to a very good one.' 'If any justice of peace wants a clerk, I can help to one that has been so seven years; understands accounts; to be a butler; also to receive money. He also can shave and buckle wigs.' 'If I can meet with a sober man that has a counter-tenor voice, I can help him to a place worth thirty pounds the year, or more.' 'I want a complete young man that will wear a livery, to wait on a very valuable gentleman; but he must know how to play on a violin or flute.' 'One that has waited upon a lady divers years and understands all affairs in housekeeping and the needle, desires some such place. She seems a discreet, staid body.' 'I know of several men and women whose friends would gladly have them matched, which I'll endeavour to do, as from time to time I shall hear of such whose circumstances are likely to agree; and I'll assure such as will come to me it shall be done with all the honour and secrecy imaginable. Their own parents shall not manage it more to their satisfaction; and the more comes to me, the better I shall be able to serve 'em.'

enforced. There had for a long time past been freedom of the press in Holland, and King William was in no mood to make much use of the tyrannical opportunities offered to him in England. It must be noted, too, that with very few exceptions the newspapers, old and new, which touched on politics, sided with the Whigs who were now in the ascendant, such Tory criticisms and complaints as were ventured upon not being thought dangerous enough to need suppressing, so that there was small provocation for tyranny. James Fraser, 'commonly called Catalogue Fraser, from his skill in books and constant frequenting of auctions,' who took the place of L'Estrange¹ as licencer under the new ministry, was, we are told, 'kind and temperate,'² and little or no difficulty occurred till 1692, when, for too much liberality, Fraser was dismissed. Edmund Bohun, who succeeded him, was more meddlesome,³ but before he or anyone else could work much mischief, licencer-ships had been abolished.

The Licensing Act, brought up for renewal in February 1693, was passed, notwithstanding some vigorous protests, in which Halifax and other Whig peers took active part, but only for two years. In February 1695, the House of Commons decided, without a division, that it should not be again renewed. The Lords thought otherwise, and there was a dispute

¹ L'Estrange died in 1704 at the age of eighty-seven.

² Dunton, *Life and Errors*, p. 350. Dunton says that his own payments in licensing fees to Fraser amounted, during several years, to at least 30*l.* a year, and 'I suppose other booksellers were as forward as myself to have recourse to him, which made his salary very considerable; and he deserved every penny of it.' From the same informant we learn that at least one of Fraser's subordinates, Robert Stephens, 'the messenger of the press,' did not object to taking presents when he was wanted to wink at questionable publications. This, however, was probably oftener the case with books and pamphlets than with newspapers.

³ Macaulay, *History of England*, chap. xix.

between the houses on the matter. A string of weighty arguments which had been drawn up by John Locke was, however, submitted to the conference at which the question was to be decided on April 18, and the Lords surrendered.¹ Thus the way was opened, though not quite cleared, for far more progress of newspaper enterprise than had hitherto been possible.

¹ Macaulay, *History of England*, chap. xix. Some account of this business is given in my *Life of John Locke*, vol. ii. pp. 311-316.

CHAPTER III.

OUTCOME OF THE REVOLUTION.

1695—1714.

NEWSPAPERS improved but slowly after the Revolution of 1688. They increased in numbers and gained a little independence, even while the Licensing Act continued ; but they were still small clumsy sheets, issued once, twice, or, in the case of 'The London Gazette,' thrice a week, generally offering two double-columned folio pages for a penny, and furnishing only a scanty supply of news, either dry and not always accurate official information, in which the most important matters were rarely taken account of, and very rarely indeed taken due account of, or composed of brief and inaccurate scraps of gossip, chiefly from abroad and about foreign events. As caterers of news they were crude and faulty, and as critics and commentators they were yet more defective. Such as they were, however, they were popular. 'The press was again set to work,' said a writer in one of them in 1712, referring to the change wrought by the Revolution, 'and such a furious itch of novelty has ever since been the epidemical distemper, that it has proved fatal to many families, the meanest of shopkeepers and handicrafts spending whole days in coffee-houses to hear news and talk politics, whilst their wives and children wanted bread at home, and, their business being neglected, they were themselves thrust

into gaols or forced to take sanctuary in the army. Hence sprang that inundation of "Postmen," "Post-boys," "Evening Posts," "Supplements," "Daily Courants," and "Protestant Postboys," amounting to twenty-one every week, besides many more, which have not survived to this time, and besides "The Gazette," which has the sanction of public authority.'¹

Immediately after the abolition of the Licensing Act several new papers, taking advantage of the greater freedom now allowed by law, were started. First in the field was 'The Flying Post,' begun on May 11, 1695, by George Ridpath, described as 'a considerable scholar, well acquainted with the languages, a Scotchman, and designed first for the ministry ; but, by some unfortunate accident or other, the fate of an author came upon him.'² His nationality showed itself in the prominence given to Scotch news in 'The Flying Post,' which was 'highly valued and sold well,' and in which Ridpath announced in his first number, 'our design is not to interfere with "The London Gazette," but to pursue another method, there being many things below its cognisance that are urgent to be known, and may give further light into present transactions.'

'Intelligence, Domestic and Foreign,' followed on May 14, and was continued on Tuesdays and Fridays

¹ *The British Mercury*, August 2, 1712. This was a shrewd combination of a touting miscellany and a newspaper, 'printed for the Company of the Sun Fire Office, in Threadneedle Street, behind the Royal Exchange, London, where policies are delivered out for insuring houses, movable goods, furniture, and wares from loss and damage by fire, in any part of Great Britain, for the value of 500*l.* each policy to any person who shall take them, paying the stamp duty and the first quarter, namely two shillings, if they desire no *British Mercury*; or two shillings and sixpence, if they will have it.' *The British Mercury* was thus, to all intents and purposes, a halfpenny newspaper. When the Stamp Act of 1712 ruined many papers, it was able to boast itself strong enough to sustain no damage.

² Dunton, *Life and Errors*, p. 229.

for a short time ; but it seems never to have won much favour, and soon dropped out. Its conductor was Benjamin Harris, a zealous Whig, who had suffered for his politics several years before, especially through his support of the Exclusion Bill in 1681. ‘Some time since,’ he said in his preface, ‘I published an “Intelligence,” with the like title, wherein upon all occasions I vigorously asserted the laws and liberties of England against the bold and open violators of both, which procured me so many inveterate enemies, that to save my life and my family from ruin, I was compelled to be an exile from my native country for above eight years ;¹ but now being returned, I know no reason why I may not endeavour in some measure to retrieve my losses and misfortunes by the same methods under the happy government of his present majesty who hath so gloriously restored and confirmed our rights and privileges to us.’ Harris proposed ‘to make reflections’ as well as to give news, but his honest efforts were surpassed by younger rivals. After the failure of his ‘Intelligence,’ he started another paper, ‘The London Post.’

‘The Postboy, an Historical Account of the Public Transactions of this Nation,’ which first appeared on May 17, was a diligent reporter of foreign, and particularly of Spanish events, as well as of events nearer home, though these, alike in ‘The Postboy’ and in other papers, were only few, vague, and briefly reported, as in the following sentences :—‘ ’Tis said that the Tsar of Muscovy was at the playhouse on Saturday to see the opera.’ ‘ ’Tis believed that the Earl of Portland is by

¹ ‘In Charles II.’s reign,’ says Dunton, ‘they fined him 500*l.* and set him once in the pillory, but his wife, like a kind rib, stood beside him to defend her husband against the mob. After this, having a deal of mercury in his natural temper, he travelled to New England, where he followed bookselling, and then coffee-selling, and then printing, but continued Ben Harris still.’—*Life and Errors*, p. 293.

this time at Paris.' 'I hear that the revel in the Temple will end on Friday next, at which time there is to be a masquerade.'¹ 'The Postboy,' commenced by one Thomas, acquired more influence when it fell into the hands of Abel Boyer, afterwards author of 'Annals of Queen Anne' and other books, and compiler of a long popular English and French dictionary, of whom we are told that he 'writes and translates like the famous L'Estrange,' and 'is the greatest master of the French language and the most impartial historian of any we have in England.'²

'Post' was now as favourite a name for newspapers as 'Diurnal' or 'Mercury' had formerly been, and prominent among other journals started in 1695 were 'The Postman,' edited by a French Protestant named Fonvive, and 'The English Post,' edited by Nathaniel Crouch. According to contemporary evidence, Crouch 'is a very ingenious person, and can talk fine things upon any subject,' and of Fonvive it was reported that 'his learning deserves respect and his gravity a weekly panegyric; his sagacious look is an index of his thoughtful soul; he is ever cheerful (the gaining of 600*l.* a year by a penny paper would make any man so); to carry on his weekly chronicle as to foreign news he has settled a good correspondence in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Flanders, Holland, &c.'³

Though newspapers were so plentiful at this time, news-letters were not yet out of fashion, and 'The Flying Post' invited its readers, if they liked, to combine the two arrangements. 'If any gentleman has a mind to oblige his country friend or correspondent with this

¹ *The Postboy*, January 18 and 20, 1697.

² Dunton, *Life and Errors*, p. 240.

³ *Ibid.* Dunton praises some other old newspaper men, and speaks of others as 'a rabble of scandalous hackneys, fit for no company or honour but a house of correction.'

account of public affairs,' it was announced, 'he may have it for twopence of J. Salisbury, at the Rising Sun, in Cornhill, on a sheet of fine paper, half of which being blank he may thereon write his own private business or the material news of the day.' Ichabod Dawks, who started his 'News-letter' in August 1696, went further in the same direction. His paper was printed from type in imitation of handwriting, and thus specially recommended in its prospectus: 'This letter will be done upon good writing-paper, and blank space left that any gentleman may write his own private business. It does undoubtedly exceed the best of the written news, contains double the quantity, with abundance more ease and pleasure, and will be useful to improve the younger sort in writing a curious hand.'

Whether or not 'Dawks's News-letter' was much used as a copy-book among the 'younger sort,' some older people, of the Sir Roger de Coverley sort, liked to get their news in this way. 'It is our custom at Sir Roger's, upon the coming in of the post,' Addison wrote in the 'Spectator,' 'to sit about a pot of coffee, and hear the old knight read Dyer's letter, which he does with his spectacles upon his nose and in an audible voice, smiling very often at those little strokes of satire which are so frequent in the writings of that author.'¹

Dyer's news-letters were not printed, but he was a printer who got into trouble more than once. In the early years of William III.'s reign his manuscript reports of current events, strongly flavoured with Jacobite opinions, circulated widely among the Tories and Stuart sympathisers, and gave great offence to the government. Dyer had been twice imprisoned for seditious

¹ *The Spectator*, July 26, 1711.

publications before 1694, when, much to the annoyance of the authorities, he was acquitted on a charge of having turned the Lancashire plot into ridicule.¹ In December of the same year he was summoned to appear at the bar of the House of Commons, and there reprimanded 'for his great presumption' in taking notice of the proceedings of parliament.² This appears to have been the first instance in William's time of insistance on a parliamentary privilege which led to much quarrelling and petty persecution in later years. Besides reprimanding Dyer, the House of Commons passed a resolution 'that no news-letter writers do, in their letters or other papers that they disperse, presume to intermeddle with the debates or any other proceedings of the house.' Dyer was not thereby silenced. 'Such a gentle rebuke,' it was said, 'could not reform a fellow who wrote for two very necessitous causes—for the Jacobite party and for bread. But the Lord Mohun rebuked him more effectually some time after; for, finding him at one of his factious coffee-houses and showing him a letter wherein his lordship was named, Dyer owned it, not knowing my lord, who immediately laid on him with a cudgel he had provided for that purpose, and made him swear to have no more to say of the Lord Mohun.'³ That example was followed with worse results afterwards by other aggrieved noblemen and gentlemen.

Parliament, meanwhile, though it would not, or could not, emulate the old tyrannies, persisted in such minor persecutions as were in its way, especially in assertion of what it regarded as its right to immunity from all criticising or even reporting of its conduct.

¹ Macaulay, *History of England*, chap. xx.

² Knight Hunt, *Fourth Estate*, vol. i. p. 164.

³ Kennet, *History*, vol. iii. p. 666.

The House of Commons having in 1696 sanctioned the issue of exchequer bills, 'The Flying Post' hazarded this mild statement in its number for April 1, 1697: 'We hear that when the exchequer notes are given out upon the capitation fund, whosoever shall desire specie on them shall have it at $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the society of gentlemen that have subscribed to advance some 100,000*l*.' On the ground that this was a malicious insinuation, tending to damage the credit of the exchequer bills, the house ordered the printer, John Salisbury, into custody.¹ There was even some talk of reviving the Licensing Act as a necessary means to keeping the press in order, and a bill to this intent was brought in. It was defeated on the motion for its second reading, and never heard of again, but many efforts were made to act upon its spirit. After William III.'s death in March 1702 the Tories, whom Queen Anne favoured, were as tyrannical as they dared to be. Happily, they were not able to do much.

One of their victims was John Tutchin, an old offender though a young man when he died. Tutchin, a stripling at the time, had in the days of James II. been condemned to imprisonment for seven years and to be whipped once every year through all the market towns in Dorsetshire because he had written some seditious verses. Having caught smallpox while in gaol, he had been released through the influence of friends with money enough to buy a pardon; but his early sufferings only made him a more zealous politician than before.² In conjunction with John How, the

¹ *Parliamentary History*, vol. v. p. 1164. No complaint, however, was made of friendly notices; thus *The Postman* of May 7, 1697, said of the exchequer bills, 'They are found by experience to be of extraordinary use to the merchants and traders of the city of London and all other parts of the kingdom.'

² Knight Hunt, *Fourth Estate*, vol. i. pp. 169-172.

printer, he started 'The Observator,' a new paper which adopted L'Estrange's lapsed title and imitated it in some other respects, though on different party lines, on April 1, 1702.¹ It was in the nature of a weekly pamphlet rather than a newspaper, and, after the nineteenth number, was in the form of a series of dialogues between an outspoken Whig and a countryman. One of his friends spoke of him as 'the loyal and ingenious Tutchin, the bold assertor of English liberties, the scourge of the highfliers, the seaman's advocate, the detector of the Victualling Office, the scorn and terror of fools and knaves, the nation's Argus;' and, it was added, 'he writes with the air of a gentleman and sincerity of a Christian.'² The government did not like Tutchin's way of writing. In January 1704 the House of Commons resolved 'that "The Observator" from December 8 to 12 contains matter scandalous and malicious, reflecting on the proceedings of the house, tending to the promotion of sedition in the kingdom, and that Tutchin, the author, How, the printer, and Bragg, the publisher of that paper, should be taken into custody by the sergent-at-arms.'³ No action appears to have been pursued against How or Bragg, but Tutchin was arrested, bailed out for 1,000*l.*, and brought up for trial at the Queen's Bench Court in November. He was found guilty by the jury; but on a plea from his counsel that there had been an error in the indictment, the judges decided in his favour, leave being given for a new trial. This never came off, and Tutchin persevered with his plain speaking in 'The Observator' for some while. In his case, as in Dyer's,

¹ From the evidence given at the trial in 1704, it appears that How paid Tutchin half a guinea for writing each number of *The Observator*.—Howell's *State Trials*, vol. xiv. p. 1105.

² Dunton, *Life and Errors*.

³ *Commons' Journals*, vol. xiv. p. 270.

however, and with worse result, private hands administered to him the punishment that the law did not sanction. He was waylaid one night and so cruelly beaten that he died soon afterwards.¹

A far greater man had in the meanwhile come forward to continue and vastly improve upon the sort of work attempted by Tutchin as an independent journalist. Daniel Defoe, born in 1661, had written much besides 'The True-born Englishman' before his 'Shortest Way with Dissenters,' published in 1702—and, before its satire was understood, welcomed by the Tories—caused him to be put in the pillory and locked up for nearly two years in Newgate; but it was his imprisonment that started him in journalism. During the first six months in which he followed his new calling, indeed, the work was actually done in his Newgate cell.

The first number of 'A Weekly Review of the Affairs of France, purged from the Errors and Partiality of News-writers and Petty Statesmen of all Sides,' appeared as an eight-page quarto on February 19, 1704. With the fifth number it was reduced to a four-page paper, printed in smaller type, and with the seventh it began to be issued twice a week. Before the end of the year the issues were increased to three a week, with monthly supplements, and the title—altered to 'A Review of the Affairs of France, with some Observations on Transactions at Home,' on February 27, 1705—was again altered to 'A Review of the State of the English Nation,' on January 1, 1706. Under the latter title it was carried on without further change till May 1713, when Defoe, once more imprisoned, abandoned it, to find plenty of occupation in other ways after his release and until his death in 1731. During its nine

¹ Knight Hunt, vol. i. p. 173; Andrews, vol. i. pp. 97, 98.

years' run, however, his 'Review' revolutionised English journalism.

Even from the first Defoe only in part discussed 'the affairs of France' in his clever paper. Affairs in general were his theme, though he found special matter for comment in the foreign complications with which his country was then burdened. When he spoke of France and past or distant occurrences, his allusions were mainly to England or to the wars it was engaged in, and to other matters near and present. 'This paper,' he said in his opening paragraph, 'is the foundation of a large and very useful design, which, if it meet with suitable encouragement, *permissu superiorum*, may contribute to setting the affairs of Europe in a clearer light, and to prevent the various uncertain accounts and the partial reflections of our street scribblers, who daily and monthly amuse mankind with stories of great victories when we are beaten, miracles when we conquer, and a multitude of unaccountable and inconsistent stories which have at least this effect, that people are possessed with wrong notions of things, and nations wheedled to believe nonsense and contradictions.'

It was a better sort of journalism that Defoe undertook to introduce, a journalism that would be critical and instructive, exposing follies and falsehoods, enforcing truths, and elucidating principles. 'Not,' he explained, 'that the author thinks it worth while to take up your hours always to tell you how your pockets are picked and your senses imposed upon; only now and then when 'tis a little grosser than ordinary.' In his second number Defoe introduced a 'Mercure Scandale, or advice from the Scandalous Club, being a weekly history of nonsense, impertinence, vice, and debauchery.' This, filling a third or half of each number, was a

satirical commentary on such occurrences of the day and such social tendencies as seemed to him especially absurd or obnoxious, necessary to be laughed at or severely blamed, and it frequently and freely found fault with the statements and opinions given in such contemporary papers as 'The Postman' and 'The Flying Post.' For the rest, Defoe's articles, generally one in each number, were grave yet abundantly humorous essays on questions of immediate moment, whether dealing with passing events or with their general bearings, causes, or effects, and whether connected with politics, religion, trade, or any other phase or department of human conduct. At first he paid most attention to the European war, and was a zealous advocate of peace; then he argued persistently in favour of the union between England and Scotland; and after that he paid particular attention to commercial affairs and was a pioneer of free trade. 'I saw,' he said in the preface to his third yearly volume, 'a parcel of people caballing together to ruin property, corrupt the laws, invade the government, debauch the people, and enslave and embroil the nation; and I cried "Fire!"—or rather I cried "Water!" for the fire was begun already. I saw all the nation running into confusion and directly flying in the face of one another, and cried out "Peace!" I called upon all sorts of people that had any senses to collect them together and judge for themselves what they were going to do.' Those sentences, written in 1706, express the purpose and the effort, and indicate the manner and the method of 'A Review' before Defoe allowed himself to become a tool of the Tories. It was not, strictly speaking, a newspaper, but it contained much better journalism than there had been in England before, not matched by anything of the same kind aimed at by his contemporaries, and, due allowances being

made for the man and his times, not often surpassed by any who have followed him.¹

Unfortunately, though Defoe evidently began his newspaper work as an honest politician, and may have convinced himself all along that he was honest and only doing his best and utmost to advance the interests of his country, he came to be very much of a timeserver. Set in the pillory in 1702 for enraging the Tories by language so outspoken that it enraged many Whigs as well, and too independent all through his life to be much liked by any party or any leader, he thought it politic, better for himself and perhaps better for the country, to adapt himself to the varying conditions of the ugly society in which he moved. He sided to some extent now with Tories, now with Whigs, and now with Tories again, according as the one or the other party was in the ascendant. As he said, frankly and cynically, 'It occurred to me, as a principle for my conduct, that it was not material to me what ministers her majesty was pleased to employ: my duty was to go along with every ministry, so far as they did not break in upon the constitution and the laws and liberty of my country; my part being only the duty of a subject, viz., to submit to all lawful commands, and to enter into no service which was not justifiable by the laws; to all which I have exactly obliged myself.'²

While Defoe's 'Review' was instructing many readers and offending many, newspaper enterprise in more commonplace lines was progressing. A step forward was made on March 11, 1702, three days after Queen

¹ Dunton, who praised smaller men more lavishly, says of Defoe that he 'is a man of good parts and very clear sense. His conversation is ingenious and brisk enough.'—*Life and Errors*, p. 239. That was in 1705, however, when *A Review* had been only just started.

² Defoe, *An Appeal to Honour and Justice* (1715). We shall see more of Defoe's policy, or weakness, in the next chapter.

Anne's accession, when 'The Daily Courant,' the first English daily paper, appeared, giving on a single folio page six short paragraphs of news translated from 'The Harlem Courant,' one from 'The Amsterdam Courant,' and three from 'The Paris Gazette,' followed by this advertisement: 'It will be found from the foreign prints which from time to time, as occasion offers, will be mentioned in this paper, that the author has taken care to be duly furnished with all that comes from abroad in any language. And, for an assurance that he will not, under pretence of having private intelligence, impose any additions of feigned circumstances to an action, but give his extracts fairly and impartially, at the beginning of each article he will quote the foreign paper from whence 'tis taken, that the public, seeing from what country a piece of news comes with the allowance of that government, may be better able to judge of the credibility and fairness of the relation. Nor will he take upon him to give any comments or conjectures of his own, but will relate only matter of fact, supposing other people to have sense enough to make reflections for themselves.' Here was a sneer at the contemporaries who, in the interests of the Whig, Tory, or other factions with which they sympathised, were getting more and more into the way of 'making reflections' in the course of their news-reporting, even where they did not write leading articles or essays like Tutchin and Defoe. 'This "Courant," as the title shows,' it was added, 'will be published daily, being designed to give all the material news as soon as every post arrives, and is confined to half the compass, to save the public at least half the impertinences, of ordinary newspapers.'

This modest forerunner of 'The Times' was issued by a bookseller named Mallet, 'next door to the King's

Arms Tavern, at Fleet Bridge,' and without advance on its original plan till April 22, when, doubled in quantity of matter by the filling up of the hitherto blank second page with news and advertisements, it bore the imprint of Samuel Buckley, 'at the sign of the Dolphin, in Little Britain.' Buckley was one of the most successful of the old tradesmen in news. 'He was originally a bookseller,' we are told, 'but follows printing. He is an excellent linguist, understands the Latin, French, Dutch, and Italian tongues, and is master of a great deal of wit. I hear he translates out of the foreign papers himself.'¹ He was now owner of a primitive magazine, 'The Monthly Register,' was soon to be Steele's and Addison's publisher for 'The Spectator,' and only gave up 'The Daily Courant' in 1714 to take charge of 'The London Gazette.'²

Several other new papers were started in Queen Anne's reign, to compete more or less skilfully and profitably with those which had survived from the crowd begun in the almost unfettered days of William III. One was 'The Evening Post,' which had short life in 1706, but was revived more auspiciously on September 6, 1709, partly to give special prominence to English news, seeing, as the editor said in his first number, that 'we read more of our affairs in the Dutch papers than in any of our own.' That remark applied to serious matters. Of scandalous gossip there was more than enough; and Defoe's 'Review' had produced several imitators in the way of satire and criticism, though chiefly in different styles, and themselves

¹ Dunton, *Life and Errors*.

² Besides the penny edition of the *Courant*, there was another. The number for September 21, 1705, announces that 'the news of every post-day's *Courant* is constantly printed with the news of the day before on a sheet of writing paper, a blank being left for the convenience of sending it by the post, and may be had for 2d.'

differing, from that used by him. In 1709 there were eighteen separate papers published in London, issuing in all thirty-five numbers every week ; and there was some excuse for the clever device of a fresh money-grubber who on September 27, to some extent anticipating the modern 'Public Opinion,' started 'The General Postscript, being an Extract of all that is most material from the Foreign and English Newspapers, with Remarks upon the "Observator," "Review," "Tatlers," and the Rest of the Scribblers, in a Dialogue between Novel and Scandal.'

A list, with satirical notes, printed in the first number of that miscellany, helps us to see what was the journalistic provision offered to Londoners at breakfast-time or supper-time on each day of the week in the autumn of 1709. Besides 'The Daily Courant,' conducted by Buckley, here described as 'Socinus Editor, a Modern Whig,' which of course appeared every morning, there was 'The London Gazette' on Monday, Thursday, and Saturday, said by another writer to be 'the truest and most cautious of all the gazettes I know ; it inserts no news but what is certain, and often waits for the confirmation of it before it publishes it.'¹ There also appeared 'The Supplement,' an alternate edition of 'The Postboy,' 'by Jacobus Abellius, a postscriptorian,' otherwise Boyer ; 'The General Remark,' 'by the most learned and laborious Pavius, projector and operator extraordinary ;' 'The Female Tatler,' 'by Scandalosissima Scoundrelia and her two natural brothers ;' and 'The General Postscript,' whose editor called himself 'Novellus Scandalus, an ubiquitarian,'—all on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday ; and 'The British Apollo,' 'by a society of gentlemen

¹ Misson, quoted by Mr. Ashton, *Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne*, vol. ii. p. 66.

consisting of *Abednego Simpleton* only,' on Monday alone. Every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, '*The Postman*,' 'by *M. Hugonotius Politicus Gallo-Anglicus*, a spiteful commentator,' otherwise *Fonvive*, *Boyer's 'Postboy*,' and '*The Flying Post*,' still edited by *Ridpath*, or '*Scotus Fanaticus*,' tripped one another up in the morning; while the evening rivals were '*The Evening Post*,' 'by *Compositus Fatuus*, a defacer of languages,' and '*The Postboy Junior*,' another venture of *Boyer's*; and '*The City Intelligencer*,' 'by *Mr. Nibble-news*, a paragrapharian,' catered particularly for commercial readers. On Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday also, *Defoe*, '*Verbosus Enthusiasticus*, a modernist,' brought out his '*Review*,' with which on the same days competed the young '*Tatler*,' 'by *Scriptor Furiosus*, a superintendent and court intelligencer,' otherwise *Richard Steele*, '*The Rehearsal Revived*,' 'by *Agitatus Maximus*, an antediluvian,' and '*The Whisperer*,' 'by *Mrs. Jenny Frivolous*, a near relation to *Jacobus Abellius*, the postscriptorian.' And besides all these papers there was a new series of '*The Observer*,' now conducted by *Ridpath* as a successor to *Tutchin*, which appeared every Wednesday and Saturday. Thus there were six distinct publications to read or choose from on Monday, twelve on Tuesday, six on Wednesday, twelve on Thursday, six on Friday, and thirteen on Saturday. In addition to these were some smaller papers, '*Dawks's News-letter*,' posted every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday evening for a subscription of thirty shillings a quarter, and *Dyer's* and other written news-letters.

About journalism in his day Addison made some amusing remarks in 1709, the year, it may be noted, in which the victory at Malplaquet promised to bring to an early close Marlborough's long campaigning and

the stream of war news that gave the journalists plenty to write about. 'That,' he said, 'is the ingenious fraternity of which I have the honour to be an unworthy member: I mean the news-writers of Great Britain, whether Postmen or Postboys, or by what other name or title so ever dignified or distinguished. The case of these gentlemen is, I think, more hard than that of the soldiers, considering they have taken more towns and fought more battles. They have been upon parties and skirmishes where our armies have lain still, and given the general assault to many a place when the besiegers were quiet in their trenches. They have made us masters of several strong towns many weeks before our generals could do it, and completed victories when our greatest captains have been content to come off with a drawn battle. Where Prince Eugene has slain his thousands, Boyer has slain his ten thousands. This gentleman can, indeed, be never enough commended for his courage and intrepidity during the whole war. He has laid about him with an inexpressible fury, and, like the offended Marius of ancient Rome, made such havoc among his countrymen as must be the work of two or three ages to repair. It must be confessed, the redoubted Mr. Buckley has shed as much blood as the former, but I cannot forbear saying (and I hope it will not look like envy) that we regard our brother Buckley as a kind of Drawcansir who spares neither friend nor foe, but generally kills as many of his own side as the enemy's. It is impossible for this sort of men to subsist after a peace.¹ Every one remembers

¹ Addison was here almost plagiarising Shirley's mockery of 'news-makers' in his *Love Tricks*, produced in 1625, nearly ninety years before. 'A peace concluded is a great plague upon them, and if the wars hold out we shall have stores of them,' says Gasparo. 'They are indeed bastards, not sons of war and true soldiers, whose divine souls I honour. Yet they may be called great spirits, too, for their valour is invincible. These, I

the shifts they were driven to in the reign of King Charles II., when they could not furnish out a single paper of news without lighting up a comet in Germany or a fire in Moscow. There scarce appeared a letter without a paragraph on an earthquake. Prodigies were grown so familiar that they had lost their name, as a great poet of that age has it. I remember Mr. Dyer, who is justly looked upon by all fox-hunters in the nation as the greatest statesman our country has produced, was particularly famous for dealing in whales, insomuch that in five months' time (for I had the curiosity to examine his letters on that occasion) he brought three into the mouth of the river Thames, besides two porpoises and a sturgeon. The judicious and wary Mr. Ichabod Dawks hath all along been the rival of this great writer, and got himself a reputation from plagues and famines, by which in those days he destroyed as great multitudes as he had lately done by the sword. In every dearth of news, Grand Cairo was sure to be unpeopled.'¹

That clever skit, if not Addison's first exploit in journalism, was his first contribution to 'The Tatler,' which his friend Steele had begun on April 12, 1709.

Steele, Addison's bosom friend till near the end of the latter's life, was, like him, now thirty-five years old. He had in May 1707 been appointed gazetteer or responsible editor of 'The London Gazette,' with a salary of 60*l.* a year, which was soon increased to 300*l.*, and

say, will write you a battle in any part of Europe at an hour's warning, and yet never set foot out of a tavern; describe you towns, fortifications, leaders, the strength of the enemy, what confederates, every day's march. Not a soldier shall lose a hair, or have a bullet fly between his arms, but he shall have a page to wait on him in quarto. Nothing destroys them but want of a good memory, for if they escape contradiction they may be chronicled.' At which Antonio exclaims, 'Oh, brave trade!'

¹ *The Tatler*, May 21, 1709.

his income from other sources raised the total to at least 1,000*l.*, which placed him in a far more comfortable position than any of the regular journalists could boast of. His duties as gazetteer were not onerous, and, occupied with other literary and various concerns, he appears at this time to have taken no more interest in party politics than was necessary to his station as a friend and favourite of the men in power, and especially of Robert Harley, then chief secretary of state, and afterwards Earl of Oxford. This was the day of new journalistic ventures, however, and Steele's aptitude for such work inclined him to start one, partly, but only in part, on the lines of Defoe's 'Review,' and in competition with such other papers already in the field as the revived 'Observator' and 'The British Apollo, or Curious Amusements for the Ingenious, to which are added the most material occurrences, foreign and domestic, performed by a society of gentlemen'—this last being a scurrilous sheet that had been started in February 1708. Hence 'The Tatler.'

— 'Though the other papers which are published for the use of the good people of England,' Steele wrote in his first number, 'have certainly very wholesome effects, and are laudable in their particular kinds, they do not seem to come up to the main design of such narrations, which I humbly presume should be principally intended for the use of politic persons who are so public-spirited as to neglect their own affairs to look into transactions of state. It is both a charitable and necessary work,' he added, 'to offer something whereby worthy and well-affected members of the community may be instructed, after their reading, what to think ; which shall be the end and purpose of this paper, wherein I shall, from time to time, report and consider all matters of whatsoever kind that shall occur to me.'

Steele's evident intention was that 'The Tatler' should be a critical newspaper, offering more criticism than news, discussing all sorts of questions, whether political or not, and dealing with political matters in an impartial spirit and without sympathy for those political gamblers and office-seekers, of either party, of whom he said, in a later number, 'We have a contempt for such paltry barterers, and have, therefore, all along informed the public that we intend to give them our advices for our own sakes, and are labouring to make our lucubrations come to some price in money, for our more convenient support in the service of the public.'

In the earlier numbers of 'The Tatler,' nearly all written by Steele, but under Swift's pseudonym of Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., and purporting to give wise and kindly tittle-tattle of various sorts from various centres, due attention was paid to politics in the section dated from St. James's Coffee-house. Touching this section it was even said, by way of a joke, in the preliminary announcement, 'I desire all persons to consider that I am at a very great charge for proper materials for the work, as well as that, before I resolved on it, I had settled a correspondence in all parts of the known and knowing world.' Gradually, however, politics dropped out of the paper, perhaps under the influence of Addison, who was in Ireland when 'The Tatler' was started, and only discovered that it was Steele's by the style of writing, but who, even before his return to London, gave great assistance to his friend, and began to write for it after the eighteenth number. With the eighty-third number it became entirely non-political, henceforth discussing only social, literary, and miscellaneous subjects, on the plan that was soon to be continued in 'The Spectator.'

Receiving a little help from Swift, Congreve, and

other friends, and following Defoe with more graciousness in their humour, Steele and Addison put into 'The Tatler' a genial healthy spirit which delighted the reading public ; some of whom were also delighted with the examples of base rivalry and spurious imitation it provoked. Mrs. Manley learnt to be a trenchant journalist by her practice as 'Mrs. Crackenthorpe' in 'The Female Tatler' which began to appear on July 8, 1709 ; and 'The Whisperer' was quite as scurrilous an outcome of female journalism in Queen Anne's day.¹

It is not pleasant to find Defoe classed with Mrs. Manley, but we need not be surprised that the grand jury of Middlesex should have sent up this presentment on October 15 : 'Great numbers of printed papers are continually dispersed in and about this city, under the names of "The Female Tatler," sold by A. Baldwin, the "Review of the British Nation," and other papers under other titles (the authors and printers of which are unknown to the jury), which, under feigned names, by describing persons, and by placing the first and last letters of the words and otherwise, do reflect on and scandalously abuse several persons of honour and quality, many of the magistrates, and abundance of citizens, and all sorts of people ; which practice we conceive to be a great nuisance, does manifestly tend to

¹ Women were printers and publishers, as well as newspaper writers at this time. Dunton said of Mrs. Tacy Sowle, 'She is both a printer as well as a bookseller, and the daughter of one, and understands the trade very well, being a good compositor herself. Her love and piety to her aged mother is eminently remarkable, even to that degree that she keeps herself unmarried for this only reason (as I have been informed), that it may not be out of her power to let her mother have always the chief command in her house. I have known this eminent Quaker for many years, have been graciously treated at her house, and must do her the justice to say I believe her a conscientious person.' He also speaks of Mrs. Elizabeth Harris as 'the beautiful relict of my worthy friend, Mr. John Harris. She printed my *Panegyric on the Lord Jeffreys*, and other copies, that sold well.'—*Life and Errors*, pp. 300. 301.

the disturbance of the public peace, and may turn to the damage, if not ruin, of many families if not prevented. We, therefore, humbly hope this honourable court will take such effectual care to prevent these abuses as to their great wisdom shall seem meet.'¹ 'We hear,' said 'The British Apollo,' itself a bold offender, 'that my Lord Chief Justice and the whole court were highly satisfied with this presentment.' But nothing came of it. Mrs. Manley was in too intimate relations with some powerful Tories, and too serviceable to their party, for any prosecution of her to be approved of. Proceedings against her were commenced in November, but she was bailed out, and not afterwards interfered with.

Whatever little persecution was then possible was reserved for the Whigs. Steele's old patron, Harley, being now a Tory, and with Henry St. John, soon to be Lord Bolingbroke, at the head of public affairs, Steele was in 1710 deprived of his gazetteership, the excuse being that Harley had been satirised under cover of a dramatic criticism in No. 193 of 'The Tatler,' the mildest and best-mannered of all the papers published at this time. 'The Tatler' itself came to an end with its No. 271, on January 2, 1711, not because of persecution or any falling off in its popularity, but because Steele and Addison were preparing to issue in lieu of it a more ambitious and altogether non-political journal. 'The Spectator' began on March 1, 1711, and was continued every week-day without interruption until December 6, 1712. As it was in no sense a newspaper, however, only a varied and instructive series of short essays issued in daily pennyworths, it hardly here concerns us, except in so far as it now and then commented pleasantly on one or other of its rivals or the

¹ Andrews, *British Journalism*, vol. i. p. 114.

news-reading tastes of the public. A more important event in newspaper history was the appearance, on August 3, 1710, of 'The Examiner, or Remarks upon Papers and Occurrences.'

This was the earliest of an inharmonious group of papers which, with much ability and more acrimony, carried on a fierce political war during the closing years of Queen Anne's reign. Developing and systematising the crude plan of L'Estrange's 'Observer' of thirty years before, which Defoe in his 'Review' and others had improved upon, it was, with the exception of L'Estrange's 'Observer,' the first attempt at a distinct and inspired ministerial organ, propounding the opinions that the government of the day wished the public to hold with as much authority as had hitherto been, and still was, shown in the statement, through 'The London Gazette,' of facts that the government of the day wished the public to believe and be satisfied with. Prompted and guided by St. John, the chief secretary of state, who himself wrote some of its articles, its editor was Dr. William King, Steele's successor in the gazetteership, a smart writer of verse and prose, a skilful jurist, and a notorious debauchee. Its chief writers at starting were Matthew Prior, the poet and diplomatist, who had gone over with his patrons from the Whig to the Tory side, and Dr. Francis Atterbury, afterwards the bishop of Rochester who was sent to the Tower for his High Church and Jacobite partisanship. 'The Examiner,' as Addison said five years later, with bias but not inaccurately, 'was the favourite work of the party. It was ushered into the world by a letter from a secretary of state, setting forth the great genius of the author, the usefulness of his design, and the mighty consequences that were to be expected from it. It is said to have been written by

those among them whom they looked upon as their most celebrated wits and politicians, and was dispersed into all quarters of the nation with great industry and expense. Who would not have expected that at least the rules of decency and candour would be observed in such a performance? But, instead of this, you saw all the great men, who had done eminent services to their country but a few years before, drafted out one by one and baited in their turn. No sanctity of character or privilege of sex exempted persons from this barbarous usage. Several of our prelates were the standing marks of public raillery, and many ladies of the first quality branded by name for matters of fact which, as they were false, were not heeded, and, if they had been true, were innocent. The dead themselves were not spared.' ¹

'I see the town every day imposed upon,' it was stated in the first number of 'The Examiner' itself, 'by false wit, false learning, false politics, and false divinity'; and, the other papers being so grievously at fault, 'some of these papers I intend to examine and set people right in their opinions.' As the Whigs considered that people were in danger of being set wrong in their opinions by this Tory organ, they started on September 14, when it was six weeks old, 'The Whig Examiner,' 'to give all persons a re-hearing who have suffered under any unjust sentence of "The Examiner,"' and pausing in his less boisterous work for 'The Tatler,' Addison wrote most or all of its articles. 'The Whig Examiner' lived through only four numbers, however, and its place was taken by 'The Medley,' which was begun on October 5, with Addison as one of its contributors; other contributors being Steele, Oldmixon,² Dean Kennet, afterwards bishop of

¹ *The Freeholder*, February 24, 1716.

² Oldmixon says, in his querulous *Memoirs of the Press from 1710 to*

Peterborough, and Samuel Garth, the famous physician, besides the editor Arthur Maynwaring, who appears to have written most of its articles, with more solidity than wit, until it was merged in some way with 'The Flying Post,' still conducted and expanded as a political newspaper by Ridpath. Steele and Addison, the best writers on the Whig side, were not at their best in political controversy, and they were no match for their old associate, now their bitter enemy, Jonathan Swift.

Swift, who had been pushing his way in London off and on during several years, joined the staff of 'The Examiner' on November 2, when thirteen numbers had appeared, and put plenty of vigour into the next thirty-three, being the great apologist of the Tories in its columns till June 14, 1711, when his place was taken by Mrs. Manley. He retired, he said, because he could no longer be anonymous, and because the enmities he had provoked made his life unbearable, and even rendered it dangerous for him to go about after dark. 'No, no,' he wrote to Stella, 'I'll walk late no more; I ought to venture it less than other people, and so I was told.'¹ 'Those little barking pens,' he said in his last 'Examiner' article, 'which have so constantly pursued me I take to be of no further consequence to what I have writ than the scoffing slaves of old placed behind the chariot to put the general in mind of his mortality, which was but a thing of form, and made no stop or disturbance in the show. However, if these perpetual snarlers against me had the same design, I must own they have effectually compassed it, since nothing can or will be more mortifying than to reflect that I am of the same species with

1740 (p. 13), that for his work on *The Medley* he was promised 100*l.* down and a salary of 100*l.* a year; 'but alas! that emolument I heard of, but never received.'

¹ Swift, *Journal*, June 30, 1711.

creatures capable of uttering so much scurrility, dullness, falsehood, and impertinence, to the scandal and disgrace of human nature.'

Not in dullness, but in some of the other faults he complained of, Swift was at least on a par with most of his opponents, and if he was surpassed in any or all of them, it was chiefly by writers on his own side. In so far as there was less ribaldry in the newspapers and magazines of 1712 and the two or three previous years, than there had been in 1709 and earlier, this was due to the good work of Steele and Addison in 'The Tatler' and 'The Spectator,' and to the efforts of some others to follow their example. In politics licence had sunk to licentiousness, and all the present gain from recent progress in political journalism was marred by the outrageous coarseness indulged in by those who made it their trade. If Mrs. Manley no longer poured out her malicious and scandalous trivialities in 'The Female Tatler,' it was a doubtful benefit that she should be free to exaggerate Swift's vices of style in 'The Examiner.'

Swift, leaving 'The Examiner,' or perhaps still secretly writing for it from time to time, did not abandon journalism, and he came to be the special object of attack by writers to whom he had given lessons in scurrility and vituperation, but whom he could not convert to Toryism. On these he revenged himself as far as he could. It was apparently by his advice that several printers, publishers, and editors, writers in 'The Protestant Postboy,' a new paper, 'The Flying Post,' 'The Medley,' and other journals, fourteen men in all, were sent to Newgate in the course of 1711.¹ 'A rogue that writes a newspaper called "The Protestant Postboy,"' he wrote to Stella on October 10 in that year, 'has reflected on me in one of his papers, but the

¹ Andrews, *British Journalism*, vol. i. p. 106.

secretary has taken him up, and he shall have a squeeze extraordinary. He says that "an ambitious tantivy, missing his towering hopes of preferment in Ireland, is come over to vent his spleen on the late ministry," &c. I'll tantivy him with a vengeance !' In another letter he complained : ' These devils of Grub Street rogues that write " The Flying Post " and " Medley " in one paper will not be quiet. They are always mauling the lord treasurer, Lord Bolingbroke, and me. We have the dog under prosecution, but Bolingbroke is not active enough. But I hope to swinge him. He is a Scotch rogue, one Ridpath.' Again : ' One Boyer, a French dog, has abused me in a pamphlet, and I have got him up in a messenger's hands. The Secretary promised me to swinge him. I must make that rogue an example to others.'

The secretary of state here referred to, Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke, was mainly responsible for the proposal to impose a tax on newspapers, ostensibly as a means of increasing the revenue, but really as an unwise attempt to interfere with the liberty of the press, which was acted upon in 1712, and talked about more than a year before. ' They are here intending,' Swift wrote on January 31, 1711, ' to tax all little printed papers a halfpenny every half-sheet, which will utterly ruin Grub Street, and I am endeavouring to prevent it.' Swift's endeavours appear to have been in the other direction ; but, with or without his approval, the business was postponed for twelve months. At length, in her message to parliament in February 1712, Queen Anne complained of ' the false and scandalous libels, such as are a reproach to any government,' which were then plentiful, so that ' by seditious papers and factious rumours, designing men have been able to sink credit, and the innocent have suffered,' and she invited it ' to

find a remedy equal to the mischief.' The House of Commons, loyally deploring this 'abuse of the liberty of the press,' promised to curb it, and, after some delay and some altercation, it was decided that the most 'effectual way for suppressing libels' would be 'the laying a great duty on all newspapers and pamphlets.'

That was done, not openly, but by some clauses that the ministers smuggled into an Act of Parliament, passed on June 10, 1712, which was chiefly concerned with the duties to be raised on soaps, silks, calicoes, linens, and other articles. By this act, which was to come into force on August 1, and to last for thirty-two years, 'all newspapers, or papers containing public news, intelligence, or occurrences,' were to be taxed at the rate of a halfpenny apiece, if printed on half a sheet of paper or less, or a penny if on a whole sheet and not more, and of two shillings a sheet if of larger size. A tax of a shilling was also imposed on every advertisement appearing in 'any printed paper, such paper being dispensed or made public weekly or oftener.'¹

'This is the day,' Addison wrote in 'The Spectator' of July 31, 'on which many eminent authors will probably publish their last words. I am afraid that few of our weekly historians, who are men that above all others delight in war, will be able to subsist under the weight of a stamp and an approaching peace. A sheet of blank paper that must have this new imprimatur clapped upon it before it is qualified to communicate anything to the public, will make its way in the world but very heavily. In short, the necessity of carrying a stamp and the improbability of notifying a bloody battle will, I am afraid, both concur to the sinking of those thin folios which have every other day retailed to us the history of Europe for several years last past. A facetious friend

¹ 10 Anne, c. 19, § 101.

of mine, who loves a pun, calls this present mortality among authors "the fall of the leaf." As for 'The Spectator,' Addison announced that, 'in this great crisis of the republic of letters,' after considering whether or not he should throw up his pen 'as an author that is cashiered by Act of Parliament,' he and his colleagues had decided to continue their enterprise, raising the price from a penny to twopence; and he added sarcastically, 'I consider that the tax on paper was given for the support of the government, and, as I have enemies who are apt to pervert everything I do or say, I fear they would ascribe the laying down my paper on such an occasion to a spirit of malcontentedness, which I am resolved none shall ever justly upbraid me with. No, I shall glory in contributing my utmost to the public weal, and if my country receives five or six pounds a day by my labours, I shall be very well pleased to find myself so useful a member.'

Swift was more cynical and more gleeful. 'Grub Street has but ten days to live; then an Act of Parliament takes place that ruins it by taxing every half sheet at a halfpenny,' he wrote to Stella on July 19; and on August 7, 'Do you know that all Grub Street is dead and gone last week? No more ghosts or murders now for love or money. I plied it pretty close the last fortnight, and published at least seven penny papers of my own, besides some of other people's, but now every single half sheet pays a halfpenny to the queen. "The Observer" is fallen; the "Medleys" are jumbled together with "The Flying Post"; "The Examiner" is deadly sick; "The Spectator" keeps up and doubles its price—I know not how long it will hold. Have you seen the red stamp the papers are marked with? Methinks the stamping is worth a halfpenny.'

Grub Street was not ruined, however, by the passing

of the Stamp Act. Many newspapers and essay-sheets, especially those of small circulation, were crushed ; even 'The Spectator,' so far as Steele was concerned in it, coming to an end on December 6,¹ to be revived, not very successfully, by Addison alone in June 1714, and then continued through only six months. But Grub Street remained, and some of the worst habits of the worst traders in it were strengthened instead of being weakened through the pretended effort of Lord Bolingbroke and the Tory party to improve the press by throwing obstacles in its way. The newspapers that survived quarrelled with one another, and perpetrated 'libels' as freely as heretofore.² Those

¹ Steele says in this last number that the tax had 'brought into the Stamp Office, one week with another, above 20*l*. a week arising from this single paper, notwithstanding it at first reduced it to less than half the number that was usually printed before.' Whence we may infer that its circulation had fallen from about 3,200 to about 1,600.

² Here, from *The Postboy* of April 1, 1714, is a sample of the way in which most journalists abused one another : 'In *The Flying Post* of last Tuesday we have a very unusual specimen of the author's modesty in owning and recanting the lie he had so impudently fixed on Dr. S—— [Sacheverell] in his former paper. But 'tis very remarkable that, by endeavouring to excuse this lie, he unluckily falls into his habitual sin again no less than *three* times in this single paragraph. . . . So little credit is to be given to this infamous weekly libel, filled with lies of the author's own invention, or such as are taken up at second-hand and vouched by him, without the least regard to truth, common sense, or common honesty.' Abel Boyer, in *The Postboy*, claimed to be especially virtuous. In the number of September 15, 1713, he wrote : 'Last night William Thompson, Esq., came to the proprietor of this paper, and told him that if he did not insert the following paragraph in his paper of this day, "God damn him ! he would cut his throat, and he had a penknife in his pocket for that purpose." For which the proprietor of this paper designs to prosecute him according to law, but thought fit to publish this that the nation may be judges whether a person of such a character is proper to be employed in his station in the law, or whether our constitution ought to be entrusted in such hands as will not scruple to commit murder whenever it may serve their purpose.' There was sly humour in some of *The Postboy's* paragraphs. Thus we are told on January 29, 1713, that 'on Monday last that facetious and merry gentleman in the pulpit, Mr. Daniel Burgess, departed this life, to the great mortification of his female auditors.'

journalists who dabbled in politics wrote for party ends, and seldom shrank from taking bribes for what they penned in worthless praise of friends or gross abuse of opponents, unless they were influential or ambitious enough to aspire to office instead of looking for crowns or guineas in ready money ; and those who shunned politics were apt only to make almost baser use of their talents, such as these were, in dishing up stale or false scandal for the entertainment of a gaping public. There were, as we shall see, some honourable exceptions in the last years of Queen Anne's reign, and in George I.'s, but the press, merely crippled and irritated for a while by the imposition of the stamp duty, got a worse name than it had before, and deserved it. It grew ; but its growth for a time, and a long time, was crooked. Though it gave more news than formerly, the news, even when it purported to be about matters of serious importance, was often garbled and trumped up.

Addison, who laughed and grieved over this state of things, attributed it to its right causes, the chief of which he found to be 'that eternal thirst which is the portion of all our modern newsmongers and coffee-house politicians.' 'You must have observed,' he said, 'that men who frequent coffee-houses and delight in news are pleased with everything that is matter of fact, so it be what they have not heard before. A victory or a defeat is equally agreeable to them. The shutting of a cardinal's mouth pleases them one post, and the opening of it another. They are glad to hear the French court is removed to Marli, and are afterwards as much delighted with its return to Versailles. They read the advertisements with the same curiosity as the articles of public news, and are as pleased to hear of a piebald horse that is strayed out of a field near

Islington as of a whole troop that has been engaged in any foreign adventure. In short, they have a relish for everything that is news, let the matter of it be what it will, or to speak more properly, they are men of a voracious appetite but no taste.' 'There is no humour in my countrymen which I am more inclined to wonder at than their general thirst after news. There are about half a dozen ingenious men who live very plentifully upon this curiosity of their fellow-subjects. They all of them receive the same advices from abroad, and very often in the same words, but their way of cooking it is so different that there is no citizen who has an eye to the public good that can leave the coffee-house with peace of mind before he has given every one of them a reading. These several dishes of news are so very agreeable to the palate of my countrymen that they are not only pleased with them when they are served up hot, but when they are again set cold before them by those penetrating politicians who oblige the public with their reflections and observations upon every piece of intelligence that is sent us from abroad. The text is given us by one set of writers, and the comment by another.'¹

The gracious moralist of 'The Spectator' was content to make fun of the news-lovers and their tradesmen so long as the news itself was harmless, but about the harmful matter that abounded in the newspapers he used stronger language. 'Our satire,' he said, 'is nothing but ribaldry and Billingsgate. Scurrility passes for wit, and he who can call names in the greatest variety of phrases is looked upon to have the shrewdest pen. By this means the honour of families is ruined, the highest posts and greatest titles are rendered cheap and vile in the sight of the people, the noblest virtues

¹ *The Spectator*, August 8, 1712.

and most exalted parts exposed to the contempt of the vicious and the ignorant. Should a foreigner who knows nothing of our private factions, or one who is to act his part in the world when our present heats and animosities are forgot—should, I say, such an one form to himself a notion of the greatest men of all sides in the British nation who are now living from the characters which are given them in some or other of those abominable writings which are daily published among us, what a nation of monsters must we appear !’¹

Here, too, Addison pointed to the main source of the evil he complained of, and he suggested what he was sanguine enough to believe its surest remedy. ‘That which makes it particularly difficult to restrain these sons of calumny and defamation is that all sides are equally guilty of it, and that every dirty scribbler is countenanced by great names, whose interests he propagates by such vile and infamous methods. I have never yet heard of a ministry who have inflicted an exemplary punishment on an author that has supported their cause with falsehood and scandal, and treated in a most cruel manner the names of those who have been looked upon as their rivals and antagonists. Would a government set an everlasting mark of their displeasure upon one of those infamous writers who makes his court to them by tearing to pieces the reputation of a competitor, we should quickly see an end put to this race of vermin that are a scandal to government and a reproach to human nature. Such a proceeding would make a minister of state shine in history, and would fill all mankind with a just abhorrence of persons who should treat him unworthily and employ against him those arms which he scorned to make use of against his enemies.’²

¹ *The Spectator*, August 7, 1712.

² *Ibid.*

Those who were ministers of state when Addison wrote thus were in no mood to shine in history, or in their own day, by help of such policy as he recommended. Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke, and Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, not too kindly disposed towards one another, were the men in power, and, having got rid of the Duke of Marlborough and of some dangerous young Whigs like Robert Walpole, they were scheming to obtain lasting authority in England under the altered conditions incident to the ending of the War of the Succession abroad and the prospect of a speedy Hanoverian succession at home. All the newspapers and political writers that could be bought or were thought worth buying had to be employed in forwarding their interests and slandering their enemies, and the journalists who declined to become dupes or slaves under Tory guidance might not look for protection from those in office.

Steele was rather more of a politician than Addison, and it would seem that one of his reasons for giving up 'The Spectator' in December 1712 was a desire to embark in some more serious enterprise, one in which he should be better able to take part in the journalistic strife then going on. 'The Guardian,' which he started as a daily half sheet on March 12, 1713, however, though soberer in its plan as well as in its title than his first venture, was not intended to be, any more than 'The Tatler,' a political paper. 'The main purpose of the work,' he said in the first number, 'shall be to protect the modest, the industrious; to celebrate the wise, the valiant; to encourage the good, the pious; to confront the impudent, the idle; to condemn the vain, the cowardly; and to disappoint the wicked and profane.' Steele's design was, in the guise of Nestor Ironside now, as formerly in the guise of Isaac

Bickerstaff, and with the help of Addison and other friends, Pope being one of the contributors to 'The Guardian,' merely to moralise and to influence public opinion by gentle satire and sly humour, not to criticise the events of the day or the action of party leaders and partisans. But he gradually came to the conclusion that something more was needed. Before seven weeks were over he found himself engaged in a controversy with 'The Examiner,' still conducted as a violent Tory organ, with Swift and Mrs. Manley¹ among its writers; and the quarrel grew. At length Steele resolved to enter boldly into the political arena. He was elected member of Parliament for Stockbridge in the autumn of 1713. The last number of 'The Guardian' appeared on October 1, and the first of 'The Englishman' on October 6. 'It is not now a time,' he said in the latter, 'to improve the taste of men by the reflections and railleries of poets and philosophers, but to awaken their understanding by laying before them the present state of the world like a man of experience and a patriot. It is a jest to throw away our care in providing for the palate when the whole body is in danger of death, and to talk of amending the mien and air of a cripple that has lost his legs and arms.'

'The Englishman,' published thrice a week till February 15, 1714, could not, like Steele's earlier papers, be charged with too much mildness and lack of party spirit. Essays of the old sort often appeared in it, but as freely as he thought fit, and generally signing what he wrote with his own name, Steele denounced in very plain language the conduct of 'my lord,' that is, of Bolingbroke, and contradicted as plainly the

¹ 'It is nothing to me,' he said in No. 52, 'whether the *Examiner* writes against me in the character of an estranged friend or an exasperated mistress.'

articles written in 'The Examiner' to excuse or defend the government by 'your man,' as Swift was here styled. He also from time to time stated emphatically the Whig principles of government which were being subverted by the men in power. On December 17, 1713, for instance, after complaining of the political disasters then most visible to him, he said: 'I can attribute the original of all these misfortunes to nothing but the ministers, who, to make their court to their princes, flatter their ambition with the notion of their being greater than our laws, and that such weak cob-webs were designed only to tie up the feeble hands of silly subjects and not those of a mighty monarch; and thus, by unjustly endeavouring to make them greater than the laws have made them (for every Act of Parliament is a compact between the prince and the people, and the prince is as much bound by it as the meanest of his subjects), they make both the prince and people uneasy, occasion jealousies and distrusts one of the other, and, when once the mutual confidence is broken between the prince and his people, the prince may be taught to think the people do not deserve his protection and the people to think their liberties worth defending.'

That was bold language to use at a time when Queen Anne's intellect, never too strong, was failing, and her speedy death was being counted upon, and when desperate schemes were on foot, with Bolingbroke's connivance, for overturning the Act of Succession and placing on the throne the heir of James II. in lieu of the Princess Sophia or her son, the Elector George of Hanover. But Steele used more language of this sort, both in other numbers of 'The Englishman'—especially in its fifty-seventh and last—and in a pamphlet entitled 'The Crisis,' and he can hardly

have been surprised at being taken to task for it. In February 1714 the queen complained in the speech with which she opened parliament that 'there are some who have arrived to that height of malice as to insinuate that the Protestant succession in the House of Hanover is in danger under my government.' What followed is worth noting.

On March 11 the House of Commons was invited to take into consideration that part of the queen's speech, it being alleged by Mr. Auditor Foley 'that unless means were found to restrain the licentiousness of the press and to shelter from malicious and scandalous libels those who had the honour to be in the administration, they who by their abilities were best qualified to serve their queen and country would decline public offices and employments,' and by Sir William Wyndham, that 'some of Mr. Steele's writings contained insolent injurious reflections on the queen herself, and were dictated by the spirit of rebellion.' 'I think they have begun very unhappily and ungracefully against me, and I doubt not but God will turn their malice to the advantage of the innocent,' Steele wrote to his wife on the same evening ; adding, 'Lord Halifax, in the House of Lords, told the ministry that he believed if they would recommend "The Crisis" to her majesty's perusal she would think quite otherwise of the book than they do.'

On the following day, March 12, Lord Oxford's brother, Mr. Auditor Harley, on behalf of the government, laid before the Commons a formal complaint against certain passages in 'The Englishman' of January 19 and February 11, and in 'The Crisis,' 'all said to be written by Richard Steele, Esquire,' and Steele was ordered to attend in his place next morning, he having previously kept away by the advice of Lord Halifax,

who, as Mrs. Steele was informed by her husband, 'thought it would be better to have the first attack made in my absence.'

The next morning was Saturday, and there was 'a great concourse of members and spectators' to hear the obnoxious passages read and discussed, and after several speakers had 'severely animadverted on the rancour and seditious spirit conspicuous in those writings,' Steele was called upon to answer for himself. Thereupon he said that, 'being attacked on several heads without any previous notice, he hoped the house would allow him at least a week's time to prepare for his defence.' This was objected to by Foley and Harley, who were in the position of prosecuting counsel, and who proposed that the adjournment should be only till Monday. These men, though High Churchmen now, had formerly been strict Presbyterians, and had not lost the canting style of speech and manner acquired in their younger days. The temptation to ridicule them was too great for Steele. 'Assuming their sanctified countenance,' as we are told, he 'owned, in the meekness and contrition of his heart, that he was a very great sinner, and hoped the member who spoke last, and who was so justly renowned for his exemplary piety and devotion, would not be accessory to the accumulating the number of his transgressions by obliging him to break the Sabbath of the Lord by perusing such profane writings as might serve for his justification.' This appeal so amused the house that it sanctioned a postponement of the business till Thursday.

On that day, the House being cleared of strangers, with the exception of Addison and a few others permitted to assist in the inquiry, Foley moved that Steele should be asked whether he acknowledged the passages objected to. Steele promptly declared that 'he wrote

and published the said pamphlets, and the several paragraphs there which had been complained of and read to the house, with the same cheerfulness and satisfaction with which he had abjured the Pretender.' Foley then proposed that Steele should withdraw, but after a hot debate, he was allowed to remain and make a speech in his defence, after listening to the arguments of his assailants. His proposal, however, that each paragraph should be separately discussed, he being permitted to rebut the speeches made upon each in turn by a speech of his own, was overruled, after another debate in which Robert Walpole, General Stanhope, Lord Finch, and others, supported his plea, and it was resolved that 'he should proceed to make his defence generally upon the charge given against him.' The 'general' reply which he then made lasted nearly three hours. With Addison sitting near, 'to prompt him upon occasion,' it is reported, 'he spake to several heads, with such a temper, modesty, unconcern, easy and manly eloquence, as gave entire satisfaction to all who were not inveterately prepossessed against him.'

Then ensued the main debate, in which the great speech was made by Walpole. 'Why,' asked Walpole, 'is the author answerable in parliament for the things which he wrote in his private capacity? And if he is punishable by law, why is he not left to the law? By this mode of proceeding, parliament, which used to be the scourge only of evil ministers, is made by ministers the scourge of the subject. The ministers are sufficiently armed with authority; they possess the great sanction of rewards and punishments, the disposal of the privy purse, the grace of pardoning, and the power of condemning to the pillory for seditious writings—powers consistent with, and naturally arising from their exalted situation, and which they cannot too

jealously guard from being perverted to answer indirect or criminal purposes. In former reigns the audacity of corruption extended itself only to judges and juries ; the attempt so to degrade parliament itself was till the present period unheard of. The liberty of the press is unrestrained ; how then shall a part of the legislature dare to punish that as a crime which is not declared to be so by any law passed by the whole ? And why should this House be made the instrument of such a detestable purpose ? ' ¹

Neither Walpole's eloquence nor Steele's prevailed. On the division taken after this memorable debate of March 18, 1714, the author of the outspoken articles in 'The Englishman' and 'The Crisis' was expelled from the House of Commons by a majority of 245 against 152. No further punishment fell upon him ; but this was enough to mark the change that had come over the newspaper world within twenty years of the lapsing of the Licensing Act, and as one consequence of the Revolution of 1688. The crown no longer claimed the right of openly and directly controlling the press, but the House of Commons, though it dared do no more than that, allowed itself to be so far the lawless tool of the ministers of the crown as to expel from its body the member who had dared to quarrel with them and their agents in print.

¹ *Parliamentary History*, vol. vi. pp. 1265-1268 ; Coxe, *Walpole*, vol. i. p. 72 ; Nichols, *Epistolary Correspondence of Steele*, vol. i. p. 318. 'This,' says Hallam (*Constitutional History*, chap. xvi.), 'was perhaps the first instance wherein the House of Commons so identified itself with the executive administration, independently of the sovereign's person, as to consider itself libelled by those who impugned its measures.' It is significant of the variation in political progress that a few weeks before the House of Commons expelled Steele for writing against the Tories, the House of Lords—more Whig than Tory—had censured the printer and publisher of *The Public Spirit of the Whigs*, for the writing of which Lord Oxford had secretly paid Swift 100*l*.

A pretty incident occurred in the course of the debating on Steele's case. One of his supporters was Lord Finch, son of the Earl of Nottingham, whose daughter, Lady Charlotte Finch, had some time before been slandered by an anonymous writer in 'The Examiner.' Steele had taken up the cudgels on behalf of Lady Charlotte in 'The Guardian,' and thereby won the gratitude of her brother. Lord Finch, at this time a young member of the House of Commons, rose with a full heart to protest against Steele's expulsion, but, 'being embarrassed by an ingenuous modesty and over-deference to an assembly in which he had not yet been accustomed to speak, he sat down in a visible confusion.' 'It is strange I can't speak for this man, though I could readily fight for him,' he murmured. The words were overheard, and a cry of 'Hear him! hear him!' ran through the house. Lord Finch was thus induced to rise again, and, it is recorded, 'though he appeared to have utterly forgot what he rose up to speak, yet the generous motive which the whole company knew he acted upon procured him such an acclamation of voices to hear him, that he expressed himself with a magnanimity and clearness, proceeding from the integrity of his heart, that he made his very adversaries receive him as a man they wished their friend.'¹ So Steele had some reward for his brave journalism, and some compensation for the troubles it brought upon him. He had other reward and compensation in the approval of his own conscience. 'It is not for me,' he remarked on one occasion, 'to say how I write or speak, but it is for me to say I do both honestly; and when I threw away some fame for letters and politeness to serve the nobler ends of justice and government, I did not do it with a design to

¹ *Epistolary Correspondence of Steele*, vol. i. p. 328.

be as negligent of what should be said of me with relation to my interests. No, wit and humour are the dress and ornament of the mind, but honesty and truth are the soul itself.' ¹

Having discontinued 'The Englishman,' probably by the advice of his political friends, in January 1714, Steele started, on February 25, another essay paper, 'The Lover,' dealing, as its title implied, solely with domestic and social questions, and this was appearing while his expulsion from the House of Commons was in progress. It ran through forty numbers, and was followed on April 22 by 'The Reader,' intended as a direct opponent of 'The Examiner,' of which, however, only nine numbers were published. But neither of these miscellanies, nor any of the friendly or unfriendly rivals produced by other hands at this time, can be reckoned among newspapers, and therefore they do not concern us here.² Of Steele's and Addison's latest contributions to political journalism a little will be said presently. A new stage in the history of the press began with the turmoil consequent on the death of Queen Anne and the accession of George I., in August 1714.

¹ Forster, *Biographical Essays* (on Steele, Defoe, and others), p. 241.

² Characteristic of the times and the political agitation then going on was *The Patriot*, a respectable essay-sheet, started on March 22, 1714, and discontinued on January 22, 1715, when its clever young editor, John Harris, said: 'Having seen his sacred majesty King George peaceably proclaimed, happily arrived, crowned, and a public day of thanksgiving for these memorable mercies joyfully and solemnly observed, I have nothing further to say to the world.' He had other reasons for abandoning his probably not very lucrative task. 'As it has become too generally known that it is writ by a person who has not yet seen two-and-twenty,' he said, 'I would not be guilty of the arrogance to think the town should attend to that which I might very reasonably expect they should from *The Patriot*.'

CHAPTER IV.

IN WALPOLE'S DAYS.

1714—1742.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE, as the first of 'the great commoners' was styled from 1721 when he was knighted, till 1742 when he was made Earl of Orford, was a man of note almost as soon as, at the age of twenty-four, he became a member of parliament. He was influential enough under Queen Anne's Whig ministers to be an object of great hatred to the Tories, who, immediately after they acquired supremacy in 1712, avenged themselves by sending him to the Tower. His turn came in 1714, when the accession of George I. at once brought him to the front; and, though he was out of office between 1717 and 1723, he was really the most powerful man in England during seven-and-twenty years, and actual head of the government during twenty-one. In those years English newspapers were very materially altered, and in large measure through his personal action.

The temper that he showed was well expressed in his speech on behalf of Richard Steele in March 1714, while he was waiting for Queen Anne's death and the downfall of her Tory counsellors. As we have seen, he claimed for the press unrestrained liberty in so far as the crown and the parliament were concerned, but to the executive he assigned the power that he denied

to the legislature. 'The ministers,' he said, 'are sufficiently armed with authority. They possess the great sanction of rewards and punishments, the disposal of the privy purse, the grace of pardoning, and the power of condemning to the pillory for seditious writings.' There was abundant cynicism in those words, addressed to a Tory House of Commons, led by Tories whose overthrow Walpole eagerly sought, in his own interests and in the interests of the 'plain Whig principles' of which he was a zealous champion. The cynicism was no less, nor less apparent, in his dealings with the press throughout his long term of mastership. He did not favour the pillory much; but he made ample use of the (privy purse.) He preferred the system of rewards to the system of punishments, bribery to coercion; but his influence and its corrupting effects were not weakened or reduced, they were only made wider and more degrading, by the shrewdness with which he played his political game.

The game, however, was not invented by Walpole. It had been in vogue all through Queen Anne's reign, and if the chief discredit of participation in it in those days falls upon Tory leaders and Tory scribes, on Harley and St. John, Swift, Mrs. Manley, and others, it was mainly because the Tories then had more to risk and more to lose than the Whigs. Nor were the Whigs slow in following the precedents set for them in the early years of George's reign, while Walpole was steadily making for himself the position he was to hold after 1720, and while he still had Whig rivals, clever men and his seniors, to compete with.

The deterioration was gradual, and much excuse must be found for it in the fact that it was inevitable. Addison, who has told us how matters stood in Queen Anne's time, also throws some light on the state of

affairs under King George. 'There is scarce any man in England,' he wrote in 1716, 'of what denomination so ever, that is not a freethinker in politics, and hath not some particular notions of his own, by which he distinguishes himself from the rest of the community. Our nation, which was formerly called a nation of saints, may now be called a nation of statesmen. Almost every age, profession, and sex among us has its favourite set of ministers and scheme of government. Our children are initiated into factions before they know their right hand from their left. They no sooner begin to speak, but Whig and Tory are the first words they learn. They are taught in their infancy to hate one half of the nation, and contract all the virulence and passion of a party before they come to the use of their reason.' Newspapers fostered this popular taste, and were encouraged by it. 'Of all the ways and means by which this political humour hath been propagated among the people of Great Britain, I cannot single out any so prevalent or universal as the late constant application of the press to the publishing of state matters. We hear of several that are newly erected in the country, and set apart for this particular use. For it seems the people of Exeter, Salisbury, and other large towns are resolved to be as great politicians as the inhabitants of London and Westminster, and deal out such news of their own printing as is best suited to the genius of the market people and the taste of the country.'¹ 'As our news-

¹ Here are the titles and commencing dates of some of the oldest provincial papers: *The Edinburgh Gazette*, 1699; *The Edinburgh Courant*, 1705; *The Norwich Postman*, 1708; *The Edinburgh Flying Post*, 1708; *The Scots Postman*, 1709; *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, 1709; *The Newcastle Courant*, 1711; *The Norwich Courant*, 1714; *The Salisbury Postman*, 1715; *The Exeter Mercury*, 1715; *The Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 1718; *The Caledonian Mercury*, 1720; *The Gloucester Journal*, 1722; *The Reading Mercury*, 1723; *The Hereford Times*, 1739; *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, 1741; and *Keene's Bath Journal*, 1744.

writers,' Addison went on to say, 'record many facts which, to use their own phrase, "afford great matter for speculation," their readers speculate accordingly, and, by their variety of conjectures, in a few years become consummate statesmen. Besides, as their papers are filled with a different party spirit, they naturally divide the people into different sentiments, who generally consider rather the principles than the truth of the news-writer. This humour prevails to such a degree that there are several well-meaning persons in the nation who have been so misled by their favourite authors of this kind that in the present contention between the Turk and the Emperor they are won over insensibly from the interests of Christianity and become well-wishers to the Mahometan cause. In a word, almost every news-writer has his sect, which (considering the natural genius of our countrymen to mix, vary, or refine in notions of state) furnishes every man, by degrees, with a particular system of policy.'

'The Freeholder,' in which these sentences appear, was itself a respectable example of the infirmity or extravagance that Addison mildly condemned. Addison's fortunes, never very gloomy, had brightened with the change of sovereigns. He had been appointed chief secretary to the Earl of Sunderland, George I.'s lord-lieutenant of Ireland, and part of his duty was now the assistance of the government by journalism. Accordingly, in 'The Freeholder,' of which fifty-five numbers were issued between December 23, 1715, and June 29, 1716, he undertook to demonstrate the legality and expediency of the Hanoverian succession against the Jacobites, who were then causing some trouble in Scotland, and seeking to make converts in England. For his literary service in this paper Addison was

further rewarded, and for the reward he was expected to render further literary service. His friend Steele, who had also profited by the return of the Whigs to power, was more independent, or subject to other influence; and a lifelong friendship between these two was for a little while disturbed by their taking different sides on a question that arose in 1719. In that year the Stanhope ministry brought in a bill fixing a limit to the number of peers and depriving the crown of that one of its prerogatives by which it could bestow titles and place in the House of Lords on as many as it chose. Walpole, at this time out of office and to some extent in disgrace, opposed it on the ground that it would tend to establish an oligarchy in England, and Steele started 'The Plebeian' on March 14 to give popular expression to the same opinion. Addison, who was now a secretary of state, replied on the 19th in 'The Old Whig,' and some angry words were addressed on paper by each of the 'Spectator' partners to the other, Steele reproaching himself afterwards when, the Peerage Bill being dropped and both the ephemeral journals at an end, Addison died also in June. 'The Plebeian' and 'The Old Whig' were unimportant and uninteresting publications, but by reason of their faultiness they all the better illustrate the downward progress that journalism was now taking through the pressure upon it of political partisanship.¹

More notable illustration was furnished by the career of another and more business-like, but less prosperous journalist. Daniel Defoe, who started his 'Review' in 1704 as an outspoken and thoroughly in-

¹ Steele's last work in journalism was in *The Theatre*, which he started in January 1720 as a protest against the threatened revocation of his patent at Drury Lane, worth 600*l.* a year. The patent was taken from him, but it was restored on Walpole's return to power. Steele died in 1729.

dependent paper, as we have seen, had trimmed and wavered during the second half of Queen Anne's reign, holding, as he alleged, and perhaps honestly considered, that he was steadfast to the fundamental principles of good government and the essential conditions of national welfare, but shifting his ground and varying his language according as Whigs or Tories, or factions of either party, were in the ascendant. He, more than any other man, led the way in the best and worthiest development of journalism, being the first conspicuous exemplar of the value of political criticism, pungent and persuasive, as an adjunct of mere news-writing; but he had not moral fibre enough to keep him up to his ideal, and there is much that is distressing in his later career as a man of letters—the ten years or so in which, writing 'The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe' and other works that he acknowledged and that have made his name a household word, he wrote much more anonymously, and, if with what he may have regarded as patriotic purpose, trickily and with lamentable lack of self-respect and honour from those around him.¹

'A Review,' which never recovered from the harm done to it by the Stamp Act, had expired in May 1713, and in the same month had been started a new paper, 'Mercator,' which, though Defoe denied the 'authorship,' was evidently inspired and mainly written by him. It carried on, in identical terms, the work Defoe had lately undertaken in 'A Review'—advocacy of commercial alliance with France and enforcement of views tending in general to a policy of as much free

¹ For what follows about Defoe's later work I am mainly indebted to Mr. William Lee's *Daniel Defoe, his Life and Recently Discovered Writings*. With amazing industry Mr. Lee has brought together a mass of new information about Defoe's life in his first volume, and he has filled the second and third with a valuable collection of articles and sketches contributed to the various papers and magazines for which Defoe wrote anonymously.



trade as was possible in the eighteenth century. These were views not favoured by the Whigs, and there was frequent contradiction of them in 'The Flying Post,' still conducted by George Ridpath, and the cleverest of those journals then published which were not essay-sheets but strictly newspapers. The other London papers of importance issued in 1714, it may be noted, were—besides 'The London Gazette' and 'The Daily Courant,' which was still the only daily print—'The Postboy' and 'The Evening Post,' offering Tory defiance thrice a week to the Whig opinions of 'The Flying Post'; the moribund 'Examiner' and 'The Weekly Packet,' both Tory; and 'The British Merchant,' which supported the commercial policy of the Whigs. Several of the old journals had died out or lost influence during the struggle of parties incident to George I.'s succession to Queen Anne, and a new variety of journalism came into fashion before the end of the year. As improvements on the plan of 'The Weekly Packet,' a Saturday budget of sparse news and feeble comment, there were started among other Saturday sheets, generally supplying six double-column quarto pages of matter for three-halfpence, 'The Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer,' conducted in the Whig interests by George Read, a printer and publisher in Whitefriars, 'The Weekly Journal or Saturday's Post,' a Tory organ, for which Nicholas Mist of Great Carter Street was responsible—these, to avoid confusion, being usually distinguished from one another as 'Read's' and 'Mist's'—and 'Applebee's Original Weekly Journal,' also a Tory champion, issuing from Fleet Ditch. With the two last-named, and with many more, Defoe was to be connected.

While Oxford was in prison and Bolingbroke in exile, consequent on the Whig supremacy under King

George, Defoe, who had been employed by both the Tory leaders, and especially by Oxford, had his share of discomfiture and disgrace, and he found it necessary to change his plans before the new king arrived, or the new ministers—Halifax, Stanhope, Wharton, Pulteney, and others—were installed. The last number of 'Mercator' appeared on July 20, 1714, and on the 27th Defoe embarked on a singularly impudent venture. Though at political feud with 'The Flying Post,' he had had some dealings with its printer, William Hurt, against the wishes of Ridpath, and, at his instigation, Hurt took advantage of Ridpath's temporary absence to bring out 'The Flying Post and Medley,' which purported to be even more loyal to the Whig cause than Ridpath's paper really was. The number for August 14 contained a fulsome panegyric of George I., crediting him with more graces and virtues than any other human being had ever possessed, and describing him as a man 'born for council, and fitted to command the world.' In a subsequent number Defoe so slandered the Tory Earl of Anglesey, that the latter brought an action against him for scandalous libel. These proceedings put a stop to the sham 'Flying Post,' about which, as there was no law of copyright then, Ridpath could only impotently complain, and Defoe was somewhat sobered.

The proceedings were dawdled over a year or more, and he used the interval in writing several pamphlets, among others, 'An Appeal to Honour and Justice; being a True Account of his Conduct in Public Affairs,' in which, with a force that almost convinced his contemporaries, and may have almost satisfied himself, he denied that he had been guilty of political dishonesty, and in which he uttered many shrewd opinions that were doubtless honest. 'It has been the disaster of all parties in this nation,' he said, 'to be very hot in their turn, and, as

often as they have been so, I have differed from them all, and ever must and shall do so.' He declared himself averse to all violence in party warfare, and urged the government and the people 'to attain at the happy calm which is the consideration that should move us all. He would merit to be called the nation's physician,' he added, 'who would prescribe a specific for it. I think I may be allowed to say a conquest of parties will never do it; a balance of parties may.'

The trial of Defoe for libelling Lord Anglesey did not come on till July 1715. He was then found guilty, but sentence was deferred till October. In the interval he made his peace with the Whig ministers, who satisfied the lord chief justice that he ought to be pardoned 'all former mistakes' on account of the service he was henceforth to do them. The terms of the contract and his efforts to comply with it were naïvely recorded by himself. 'In considering which way I might be rendered most useful to the government,' he wrote in 1718, 'it was proposed by my Lord Townshend that I should still appear as if I were, as before, under the displeasure of the government and separated from the Whigs, and that I might be more serviceable in a kind of disguise than if I appeared openly. Upon this foot a weekly paper, which I was at first directed to write, was laid aside, and the first thing I engaged in was a monthly book, called "*Mercurius Politicus*." In the interval of this, Dyer, the news-letter writer, having been dead, and Dormer, his successor, being unable by his troubles to carry on that work, I had an offer of a share in the property as well as in the management of that work. I immediately acquainted my Lord Townshend of it, who, by Mr. Buckley,¹ let me know that it would be a very

¹ The printer of *The London Gazette*, and as such a sort of literary agent for the government of the day.

acceptable piece of service ; for that letter was really very prejudicial to the public, and the most difficult to come at in a judicial way in case of offence given. My lord was pleased to add, by Mr. Buckley, that he would consider my service in that case, as he afterwards did. Upon this I engaged in it, and that so far that, though the property was not wholly my own, yet the conduct and government of the style and news was so entirely in me that I ventured to assure his lordship the sting of that mischievous paper should be entirely taken out, though it was granted that the style should continue Tory as it was, that the party might be amused and not set up another, which would have destroyed the design ; and this part I therefore take entirely on myself still.¹

The elaborate fraud on the public, and the Tory party especially, which Defoe thus entered upon in 1715, with Lord Townshend for his first patron and partner, was continued, it would seem, under other secretaries of state till 1726. The new 'Mercurius Politicus,' a shilling magazine of 'monthly observations on the affairs of Great Britain,' was brought out regularly till September 1720, or later ; 'Dormer's Newsletter,' in manuscript, was circulated, as 'Dyer's' had been, among the Tory squires and the parsons with Jacobite sympathies until August 1718 ; and in August 1717, a third periodical was added to these two, 'to be kept, mistakes excepted,' as Defoe said, 'to pass as Tory papers, and yet be disabled and enervated, so as to do no mischief or give any offence to the government.' This third periodical was 'Mist's Weekly Journal.' Lord Sunderland, Addison's special friend, being now secretary of state, 'with his lordship's approbation,' wrote Defoe, 'I introduced myself, in the

¹ This and other self-damnatory letters of Defoe's were found by Mr. Lee in the State Paper Office in 1864.

disguise of a translator of the foreign news, to be so far concerned in this weekly paper of *Mist's* as to be able to keep it within the circle of a secret management, also prevent the mischievous part of it ; and yet neither *Mist* or any of those concerned with him have the least guess or suspicion by whose direction I do it.' *Mist* seems after this to have noticed that there was something wrong in the political tone of his paper, and he had to be brought to some extent into the conspiracy, whereupon he agreed that 'his paper shall, for the future, amuse the Tories, but not affront the government,' on condition that it should 'seem on the same side as before, rally "The Flying Post," the Whig writers, and even the word "Whig," &c., and admit foolish and trifling things in favour of the Tories.'

In this way, through '*Mist's Journal*,' Defoe was able to advance the Whig cause under pretence of being a Tory, by one or more trenchant articles which he wrote every week from August 1717 till November 1718. A quarrel with *Mist*, who thought the Whiggism was too pronounced, then led to Defoe's withdrawal ; but the circulation of the paper suffered so much by his absence that he was called back after ten weeks, and he steadily continued the work from the end of January 1719 till July 1720, writing occasional articles after that till October 1724. In the meanwhile he also wrote for other papers. Between June 1720 and March 1726 he was a regular contributor to the other Tory Saturday paper, '*Applebee's Original Weekly Journal*,' which, during those six years, gave remarkable evidence of his power and versatility almost at the close of a long and busy life.

Besides writing for already established papers, Defoe assisted in starting two new ones which acquired fame and influence ; and it is characteristic of him and his

journalistic ways that these should have been, or should have purported to be, of rival politics. 'The Whitehall Evening Post,' issued on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, was commenced on September 18, 1718, by Wilkins, of Little Britain, as a Whig newspaper, and more of a ministerial organ than 'The Flying Post,' which had now passed into the hands of Matthew Jenour of Giltspur Street. Defoe wrote for its first number, and for most of the others, till June 1720, and was able, perhaps glad, to give straightforward expression in it to the opinions he professed to hold, although, seeing that he passed for a Tory, he was obliged to be strictly anonymous. His Tory cloak had to be worn in the more important journal, 'The Daily Post,' the only daily rival at that time of 'The Courant,' which on October 24, 1719, began to be printed by Meers, of the Old Bailey, in ostensible opposition to the government. Defoe contributed to 'The Daily Post' during five and a half years, his most notable contribution being the original of 'Robinson Crusoe,' which ran through a hundred and sixty-five numbers;¹ and he may be credited with the introductory article in the first number. 'The multitude of papers already published is no discouragement to us at all,' it was there said. ''Tis the misfortune of the town to have much news but little intelligence, truth ill-told, lies ill-covered, parties ill-served, and, in a word, the readers vilely imposed upon on all sides.' The new paper proposed to give 'a just account of facts, neither lessening one side nor magnifying the other, with clear and unbiassed reasonings to explain doubtful cases.' 'If ever this were useful,' it was added, 'we think 'tis so now, when almost every transaction is set in a false light, when misrepresentation is, as it were, the business of

¹ No. 125 to No. 289.

every writer, and whether they speak of private persons or of public, the character of no man seems to be safe, but scandal and slander make havoc of men's reputations without mercy.'

Defoe was an adept in some of the vices he undertook to expose and correct. If the truths he told, when he told truths, were not ill-told, nor the lies, when he told lies, ill-covered, and if the parties he undertook to serve were only too well served by him, he was without a peer in the art, when he chose to use it, of showing transactions in a false light and of making a business of misrepresentation. His journalistic career between 1716 and 1726 was not honourable to him, and, from an ethical viewpoint, it was a melancholy ending of the work that he so brilliantly commenced in 1704. When all his faults are acknowledged, however, plenty remains for us to admire. In 'Mist's' and 'Applebee's,' in 'The Whitehall' and 'The Daily Post,' he enlarged and improved upon the style and method of journalism that he had initiated in 'A Review.' When he was not bound to serve some petty party interest, he wrote like a statesman, a philosopher, and a philanthropist; and these three qualities, or this single quality in three phases, could never be quite obliterated even when his prescribed theme was of the meanest sort. Through all his sophistry, and under all his cynicism, in spite of all his mockery, and only the more plainly because of his exuberant humour, his wisdom, his generosity, and his patriotism show themselves. He was exceptionally far-seeing, profoundly intelligent, and as honest as his temperament and his surroundings allowed him to be. He held, and boldly stated, singularly advanced views on the principles of good government, the essentials of true justice, the primary and fundamental conditions of social welfare in all its gradations and variations. He

was nearly as much of a free-trader as Richard Cobden, nearly as much of an utilitarian as John Stuart Mill. If he was writing on the education of children, on the treatment of prisoners, on the marriage laws, or on any other of the hundred other aspects in which from day to day 'the social problem' in its stupendous unity and its kaleidoscopic diversity presented itself to him, he exhibited remarkable freedom from the traditions of his day, or, if he was fettered by them, he made it clear that he felt their bondage.

He was almost the inventor of leader writing, his 'letters introductory' in 'Mist's' and 'Applebee's' being nearer approaches to the modern editorial method than were the essays in his own 'Review,' or in 'The Tatler' or 'The Spectator' of Steele and Addison. He surpassed Steele and Addison again, as regards everything but literary grace, in anticipating the modern functions of the 'special correspondent,' and in him, not in any of his contemporaries, we see the promise of modern 'society journalism.' His tittle-tattle was, for the times, notably free from coarseness, and as notably free from venom. He ridiculed constantly, but did not often sting; and he found for his political writings an audience among the class for which Addison and others had catered by their more genial and frivolous essays. 'They have of late,' it was said by him or some one else concerning such papers in 1725, in 'Applebee's,' 'been taken in much by the women, especially the political ladies, to assist at the tea-table.'

In October 1728, two and a half years before his death at the age of seventy, Defoe wrote the preliminary article of 'The Universal Spectator,' an essay-sheet started by his son-in-law, Henry Baker. It was not a newspaper, but Defoe's definition of 'a good writer' is worth quoting from it. 'The character of a good

writer, wherever he is found, is this,' he said, 'that he writes so as to please and serve at the same time. If he writes to please, and not to serve, he is a flatterer and a hypocrite; if to serve and not to please, he turns cynic and satirist. The first deals in smooth falsehood, the last in rough scandal; the last may do some good, though little; the first does no good, and may do mischief not a little; the last provokes your rage, the first provokes your pride, and, in a word, either of them is hurtful rather than useful. But the writer that strives to be useful writes to serve you, and at the same time, by an imperceptible art, draws you on to be pleased also. He represents truth with plainness, virtue with praise; he even reprehends with a softness that carries the force of a satire without the salt of it, and he insensibly screws himself into your good opinion, that as his writings merit your regard, so they fail not to obtain it.' Defoe did not reach his ideal, but few or none others in his day went so near it.

Two of the ablest political writers on the Whig side at this time were John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon. Trenchard, son of the Sir John Trenchard who was William III.'s secretary of state, had written several political pamphlets in the early years of the century, the most forcible of which were in condemnation of the then new-fangled notion of a standing army; and he was nearly sixty years old, in August 1719, when he started 'The Thursday Journal,' called after the first number 'The London Journal,' as a rival to the Tory 'Mist's,' and 'Applebee's, and with more vigour and independence than were shown in 'Read's.' Associated with him in this enterprise, and indeed doing the larger part, under his guidance, was Gordon, his junior by more than twenty years, and a Scotchman who had come to seek his fortune in London. 'He

was not fond of writing,' Gordon said concerning Trenchard; 'his fault lay far on the other side; he only did it when he thought necessary.' 'But,' adds his friend, 'he was the best tutor that I ever had, and to him I owed more than to the whole world besides. From a perfect stranger to him, and without any other recommendation than a casual coffee-house acquaintance and his own good opinion, he took me into his favour and care, and into as high a degree of intimacy as ever was shown by one man to another.'¹ Between them they made 'The London Journal' a great success. The South Sea Bubble was at that time almost full blown, and even Walpole's prudent warnings and threats could not deter the people from the fascinations its blowers offered to them. The crash came, however, in 1720, and then Trenchard and Gordon, who in the earlier numbers of their 'Journal' had vainly joined in Walpole's expostulations, found ready listeners to their reiterated demands for 'public justice on the wicked managers of the fatal scheme.' The series of articles, in the form of letters signed Cato, which they wrote, attracted immediate and wide attention.

The Cato letters, numbering a hundred and forty-four, and running from November 1720 till December 1723 dealt with many other subjects besides the South Sea Bubble and its blowers. One had reference to a proposal favoured by some tyrannical Whigs for reviving the censorship of the press in order to put a stop to the libels and seditious talk then plentiful in it. On this matter Cato spoke sensibly. 'As long as there are such things as printing and writing,' he said, 'there will be libels; it is an evil arising out of a much greater good, and as for those who are for locking up the press⁸⁴⁷ because it produces monsters, they ought to consider

¹ Gordon's preface to the reprint of *Cato's Letters*.

that so do the sun and the Nile, and that it is something better for the world to bear some particular inconveniences arising from general blessings than to be wholly deprived of fire and water. Of all sorts of libels scurrilous ones are certainly the most harmless and contemptible. Even truth suffers by ill-manners, and ill-manners prevent the effect of lies.' It was an article in the previous week's number of 'Mist's,' though not one of those written by Defoe to 'amuse the Tories' and serve the Whig government, that led Cato to speak thus. 'The author of it,' he went on to say, 'must surely be mad. He talks as if distraction were in his head and a firebrand in his hand, and nothing can be more false than the insinuations which he makes and the ugly resemblances which he would draw. The paper is a heap of falsehood and treason, delivered in the style and spirit of Billingsgate—and, indeed, most of the enemies of his majesty's person, title, and government, have got the faculty of writing and talking as if they had their education in that quarter. However, as bad as that letter is, and I think there cannot be a worse, occasion will never be taken from scurrilous and traitorous writing to destroy the end of writing. We know that in all times there have been men lying upon the watch to stifle liberty under a pretence of suppressing libels; like the late King James, who, having occasion for an army to suppress Monmouth's rebellion, would needs keep it up afterwards, because forsooth other rebellions might happen for which he was resolved to give cause! I must own that I would rather many libels should escape than the liberty of the press should be infringed.' ¹

¹ *Cato's Letters*, No. 32. Trenchard held in private the same sensible views about libels which his colleague—for the article above quoted from was Gordon's—expressed in public. 'He was very merry with those who

Neither its editors' disapproval of libel prosecutions nor their loyalty to the Whig ministry saved 'The London Journal' from being proceeded against for its plain speaking. In June 1721 Benjamin Norton Defoe was committed to Newgate on the charge of having written in it a 'scandalous and seditious libel,' the purport of which is not recorded. As this young man was Daniel Defoe's son, however, the government's indefatigable scribe appears to have induced the authorities to quash the trial. At any rate we hear no more about it.¹

Others were less fortunate. Though Walpole and his colleagues were of opinion that they could gag the press more completely and more advantageously to themselves by bribes than by penalties, this policy took some time in working out, and in the meanwhile it was often considered necessary to deal roughly with the more violent and outspoken Tories. Even *Mist*, while Defoe was using his 'Weekly Journal' as a ministerial catspaw, was threatened in July 1718 and actually fined 50*l.*, set in the pillory, and sent to prison for three months after trial at the King's Bench in February 1720.² More than that, on May 28 in the same year the House of Commons unanimously resolved that an article in that day's number of 'Mist's Journal,' the one which aroused Trenchard's scorn in 'The London Journal,' was 'a false, malicious, scandalous, infamous,

wrote scurrilously against him,' his friend tells us, 'and laughed heartily at what they thought he resented most. Not many days before he died, he diverted himself with a very abusive book written by a clergyman and pointed personally at him, by a clergyman highly obliged to his family, and always treated with great friendship by himself.' Trenchard, who in conjunction with Gordon had written an earlier series of papers entitled *The Independent Whig*, which were several times reprinted and almost as popular as *Cato's Letters*, died in 1723, before the second series was finished. Gordon married his widow and lived on till 1750.

¹ Lee, *Daniel Defoe*, vol. i. p. 352.

² Andrews, vol. i. pp. 121, 122.

and traitorous libel, tending to alienate the affections of his majesty's subjects and to excite the people to sedition and rebellion, with an intention to subvert the present happy establishment, and to introduce popery and arbitrary power'; and it was also resolved that 'a humble address be presented to his majesty, expressing the abhorrence of the house of the libel and its detestation of the author, assuring his majesty that it would stand by him and his family, and requesting that he would give the most effectual orders for prosecuting and punishing the printer and publisher of this and all other libels.' Mist was again committed to Newgate; a reward of 1,000*l.* was offered for the apprehension of Dr. Gaylard, the writer of the article, of a journeyman printer named Nathaniel Wilkinson, and of one of Mist's apprentices; and on July 5 Wilkinson was captured and locked up.¹ The excessive loyalty of the House of Commons seems to have exhausted itself at this stage, and the matter here dropped, perhaps at the instigation of Defoe, whose secret relations with the offending newspaper could not have been conveniently disclosed; but though they did not finally part company till 1724, Defoe had much less to do with Mist, and busied himself chiefly elsewhere, after this affair.

Mist, in spite of the service he did to the government by inserting Defoe's articles, suffered so much for his Toryism that he may be pardoned for feeling a malicious pleasure at his political and trade rivals being punished. This happened at least once to 'Read's Journal' when it offended the House of Lords, not so Whiggish as the House of Commons. In 'Mist's

¹ *Journals of the House of Commons*, vol. xix. p. 562. 'I have not observed any case more recent than this of Mist,' says Hallam, 'wherein anyone has been committed on a charge which could not possibly be interpreted as a contempt of the house, or a breach of privilege.'—*Constitutional History*, chap. xvi.

Journal' of March 30, 1723, it was reported that 'on Saturday last one Mr. Read, a printer of a Whig journal, out of his abundant zeal to the present government, having printed in his said scurrilous paper of that day what he calls a list of the conspirators against his majesty, unadvisedly and foolishly inserted the name of a noble lord, viz. the Earl of Stafford, for which our poor weak brother was taken into custody by the gentleman-usher of the black rod by order of the House of Lords.' Four months later, the number of 'Mist's Journal' for August 3 shows us how the example of petty tyranny set by parliament was followed in lower quarters. 'Last Tuesday,' we there read, Mr. Payne, publisher of a printed paper called 'The True Briton,' was committed to Newgate by the lord mayor and court of aldermen for contempt of the authority of that court in Monday's paper, and another before.'

'The True Briton' was a paper that the young Duke of Wharton, by birth a Whig but now a Tory and a reckless supporter of the Pretender, had lately started as part of a journalistic crusade against the government, which was carried on so violently and unscrupulously that there would have been some slight excuse for the repressive measures adopted by the authorities, if only these could have been successful and could have been saved from the accompaniment of demoralisation in the favoured as well as in the condemned portion of the press.

It was Wharton who had engaged in such a serious altercation in the House of Peers with Lord Stanhope in February 1721, that the latter had a fit of apoplexy and died in the course of a few hours ; and though the result of this catastrophe was that Walpole became premier and was quickly able to make himself dictator of English affairs during more than twenty years, the

immediate issues were thought favourable to 'the high-fliers,' as they were called. The last six years of George I.'s reign and the first three or four years of George II.'s were years of rioting and plotting throughout the country, aggravated by financial troubles consequent on the craze for speculation, of which the South Sea scheme and its collapse had merely been conspicuous instances; and the disloyal newspapers did much to foment the general disturbance. Besides 'The Daily Post,' which Defoe was commissioned to keep in order, and in connection with which 'The British Journal,' a weekly miscellany, was started in 1722, the Tories now had a 'Daily Journal,' published by Applebee along with his older 'Original Weekly Journal,' so that with 'Mist's Journal' they had three Saturday papers. They also had 'The Postboy' and 'The Evening Post,' a younger paper—both issued three times a week—and other organs, among which was another new-comer, 'The Freeholder's Journal,' as well as the Duke of Wharton's 'True Briton'; and most formidable of all for a time was 'The Country Journal, or The Craftsman,' soon to be known simply as 'The Craftsman,' the first number of which appeared on December 7, 1726.

On its title-page 'The Craftsman' was said to be 'by Caleb Danvers, Esq.' Caleb Danvers was a pseudonym for Nicholas Amhurst, the witty author of 'Terræ Filius,' which had mocked at Oxford Toryism in 1721, but now a Tory hack, in the pay of William Pulteney, who, having quarrelled with the Whigs and gone out of office in 1717, was at present and for many years a fierce opponent of Walpole and his policy. Pulteney wrote smart articles for 'The Craftsman,' but its smartest contributor was Lord Bolingbroke, lately returned from his eight years' residence in France, and as anxious to use and abuse the liberty of the press in attacking the

government of the day as he had been anxious in Queen Anne's time, and when he was master of the situation, to check all newspaper licence that was not in accord with the views put forward by himself, and for him by Swift and Mrs. Manley in 'The Examiner.' In January and February 1727 Bolingbroke published three pamphlets, 'The Occasional Writer,' in which, in the guise of a Grub Street hack, he made pretended offer to become a hireling under Walpole, and this device enabled him to pour out many pages of bitter sarcasm against the Whig administration. He put his pen to ampler and fiercer use in the articles that between 1728 and 1731 he contributed to 'The Craftsman,' under the signature of Humphrey Oldcastle, and with the title of 'Remarks on the History of England.' These scathing letters showed but a superficial knowledge of history, and they wilfully misrepresented the stages of political evolution by statement of which the writer sought to convict the Whigs of every conceivable crime against the state; but they served as channels for trenchant abuse of Walpole and his colleagues, and while they were being published, 'The Craftsman,' it is said, had a circulation only equalled by that of 'The Spectator' in its palmiest days. The Oldcastle letters were, until the time of Junius, the most brilliant and memorable specimens of this sort of journalistic work produced in England in the eighteenth century.¹

Bolingbroke was too important an enemy for even Walpole to be bold enough to try and silence by a state prosecution, but the comparative freedom now allowed to newspaper publishers and writers in all but one im-

¹ The *Drapier's Letters* with which in 1724 Swift discredited Wood's halfpence, are notable evidence both of the writer's skill and of the strength of journalism at this time; but they belong rather to the newspaper history of Ireland than to that of England.

portant particular, presently to be referred to, clearly indicates the change that had taken place in ministerial dealings with the press. Walpole had by this time brought so many papers and their writers under his control that he could well afford to disregard the attacks made upon him by such as were not of his way of thinking. Newspapers became more numerous, and most of them were considerably enlarged during the twenty years of his supremacy, but he cruelly degraded them by the system of wholesale bribery that he adopted. In the earlier period of Whig domination under the House of Hanover, writers like Steele and Addison were able, with a clear conscience, to support the ministry of the day, knowing that lucrative and dignified offices would be given to them as rewards for their journalistic services, and less successful though not less capable writers like Defoe were able to do brilliant work while scribbling to order. This was a state of things, however, which could not go on without lowering the character of the men who consented to become party tools, and rendering the press far less serviceable than it was intended to be to the politicians who thus corrupted the newspaper trade, and compelled honest men, if they desired to continue honest, to keep out of it. There is little worth recording, and very little that is not lamentable, about journalistic history during these years.]

The Stamp Act of 1712 having come to be carelessly acted upon and often evaded by printers, who contrived to issue as pamphlets what were really newspapers, or who 'printed their news upon paper between the two sizes mentioned by the law,' a committee of the House of Commons, in February 1724, probably at Walpole's instigation, called on the authorities to see that 'for any sheet of paper on which any journal, mercury,

or any other newspaper whatsoever shall be printed, there shall be paid a duty of one penny sterling, and for every half-sheet thereof the sum of one halfpenny sterling.’¹ This was nothing more than a proper insistence on observance of the existing law, but it enabled the government to put some additional pressure on those papers which it did not wish to encourage, and in connection with this business we have a ‘complete and private list of printers, humbly laid before the Lord Viscount Townshend,’ which distinguishes those who were ‘well-affected to King George.’ It specifies Buckley, of Amen Corner, who still published ‘The London Gazette’; Matthew Jenour, of Giltspur Street, who now had charge of ‘The Flying Post’; Leach, of the Old Bailey, who printed ‘The Postman’; Parker the elder, of Salisbury Street, who printed ‘The Halfpenny Post,’ a recently established paper; Read, of Whitefriars, who issued another ‘Halfpenny Post’ as well as his ‘Weekly Journal’; and Wilkins, of Little Britain, who continued to be in charge both of ‘The Whitehall Evening Post’ and of ‘The London Journal.’ When the list was prepared there were in all three daily papers in London, ‘The Courant,’ ‘The Daily Post,’ and ‘The Daily Journal,’ ten that were published thrice a week, three of them at the price of a halfpenny apiece, and five weeklies; and this list does not include ‘The Daily Advertiser,’ which in 1724 began to be published, along with the tri-weekly ‘Flying Post,’ by Jenour, or some other papers. The number was increased in 1729 by ‘The Daily Gazetteer,’ Walpole’s particular organ, and during many years as authoritatively inspired by him in matters of opinion and the general news he wished published as was ‘The London Gazette’ in respect of bald official announcements. The

¹ *Journals of the House of Commons*, vol. xx. p. 387.

old 'Daily Courant,' however, the pioneer of English daily papers, held its ground, and was in 1733 said to contain 'the best précis on the side of the ministry,' among its writers being the premier's son, Horace Walpole, Dr. Bland, and Matthew Concanen.¹

Concanen, who retired from journalism in 1731, on his being rewarded with an attorney-generalship in Jamaica, was till then one of the busiest of Walpole's scribes, and he was ranked with the lowest by Pope when he ridiculed the exploits of the Whig performers and others in swimming and diving after such base prizes as they could aim at :—

True to the bottom, see Concanen creep,
A cold, long-winded native of the deep.²

Among Concanen's most energetic colleagues, both in 'The Gazetteer' and in 'The Courant,' were a smart writer, who preserved his anonymity by styling himself Osborn, to be generally known as Mother Osborn by his opponents, and William Arnall, who bore the pseudonym of 'Francis Walsingham, Esq.' Arnall, an attorney's clerk, who worked his way into favour, had a weekly paper, 'The Free Briton,' started for him to edit, and he did so much for others also that he was able to boast that he got 'for Free Britons and other writings in the space of four years no less than 10,997*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* out of the treasury.'³ Pope spoke scornfully in his 'Dunciad' of Arnall and Osborn, as well as of Concanen and the other political writers whom he scorned to name.

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. iii. p. 91.

² *The Dunciad*, bk. ii. ll. 299, 300.

³ Warburton's note to *The Dunciad*. 'He writ for hire and valued himself upon it,' says Warburton, 'but frequently, through his fury or folly, he exceeded all the bounds of his commission, and obliged his honourable patron to disavow his scurrilities.' Of course both Pope and Warburton were biassed critics.

Next plunged a feeble, but a desperate pack,
 With each a sickly brother at his back.
 Sons of a day ! just buoyant on the flood,
 Then numbered with the puppies in the mud.
 Ask ye their names ? I could as soon disclose
 The names of these blind puppies as of those.
 Fast by, like Niobe (her children gone),
 Sits Mother Osborn, stupefied to stone ;
 And monumental brass this record bears :
 ' These are, ah no ! these were the gazetteers.'
 Not so bold Arnall ; with a weight of skull,
 Furious he dives, precipitately dull.
 Whirlpools and storms his circling arms invest,
 With all the might of gravitation blest.
 No crab more active in the dirty dance,
 Downward to climb, and backward to advance ;
 He brings up half the bottom on his head,
 And loudly claims the journals and the lead.

Though Pope's goddess of literary garbage awarded
 the ' pig of lead ' to Arnall, she, or her laureate, came
 to no decision as to

Who best can dash through thick and thin,
 And who the most in love of dirt excel,
 Or dark dexterity of groping well,
 Who flings most filth and wide pollutes around
 The stream.

And, under a different metaphor, when his hero was
 asking himself—

Shall I, like Curtius, desperate in my zeal,
 O'er head and ears plunge for the commonweal ?
 Or rob Rome's ancient geese of all their glories,
 And cackling save the monarchy of Tories ?

Pope ranked at least one Tory editor with one Whig
 editor—

'Tis the same rope at different ends they twist ;
 To dulness Ridpath is as dear as Mist.¹

Mist got into trouble again in 1728, although press
 punishments were fewer in George II.'s days than in

¹ *The Dunciad*, bk. ii. ll. 305-322, 276-280, 209-212, 207, 208.

George I.'s. For publishing in the number of his 'Weekly Journal' for August 24 an especially offensive letter from the Duke of Wharton, now sheltering himself in France, Mist was proceeded against by the government, and he thought it prudent to seek a hiding, like his aristocratic friend, across the channel. Two members of his staff, however, were caught and put in the pillory on June 19, 1729, and some months before that date 'Mist's Journal' had been discontinued after a famous and chequered life of nearly twelve years. 'Mr. Mist's friends,' we are told, 'consulting together, thought it expedient to change the title,' and in October 1728 appeared the first number of 'Fog's Weekly Journal,' under the same management, but generally 'writ with more caution.'¹ The caution was not always observed. In March 1732 the printer and publisher of 'Fog's' were imprisoned for 'defaming the memory of King William.'²

Some of the old papers that survived were in a moribund condition. Of 'Applebee's,' no longer made brilliant by Defoe, it was regretfully remarked in 1733, that 'a pack of modern wits and upstarts have almost kicked him out of doors, so that the memoirs of dying criminals are become the most peculiar entertainment of his paper;' while 'Read's,' it was complained, was 'taken up with relating piecemeal Voltaire's "Life of the King of Sweden,"" tales about the Inquisition, and so forth—which led to the mocking suggestion that 'it might not be amiss to print the Bible this way, that so people who are frightened at a large volume might be drawn in to read the Scriptures.'³

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. iii. p. 91; Andrews, vol. i. p. 132. Defoe's last known contribution to journalism appeared in *Fog's* for January 11, 1729.

² Andrews, vol. i. p. 132.

³ *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. iii. p. 91. This, as will be seen in

With all the money at his disposal Walpole did not find it easy to keep the Whig papers up to the mark. Even Trenchard's 'London Journal,' after he and Gordon had left it, was so far independent, or, as we are told, 'gave the government so much uneasiness, about 1726, about the South Sea scheme, that they thought fit to buy it into their own hands,' and the writer known as Osborn was set to edit it.¹ There came, indeed, to be one editorial supervision of all Walpole's bought or hired papers, and from the office of 'The Daily Gazetteer' orders were given for the systematic advocacy of ministerial policy by its several organs—'the author of "The Free Briton" on Thursdays, the author of "The London Journal" on Saturdays, as usual; the gentlemen of "The Daily Courant" will choose for themselves such days as may be convenient to them';² and so on. 'Into this, as a common sink,' wrote Bishop Warburton, 'was received all the trash which had before been dispersed in several journals and circulated at the public expense of the nation.'³ The authors were the same obscene men, though sometimes relieved by occasional essays from statesmen, courtiers, bishops, deans, and doctors. The meaner sort were rewarded with money, others with places or benefices, from 100*l.* to 1,000*l.* a year.'⁴ When, on Walpole's downfall, a secret committee was appointed by parliament to inquire into his conduct, it reported that in the ten years between February

another chapter, was actually done at a later date by at least one country newspaper.

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. iii. p. 91.

² *Andrews*, vol. i. p. 138.

³ It was the custom, when Dr. Bland was editing *The Gazetteer*, to allow it to be sent about post free. Hence Pope's couplet in *The Dunciad*:

Ye shall not beg, like gratis-given Bland,
Sent with a pass and vagrant through the land.

⁴ Notes to *The Dunciad*.

1731 and February 1741 he had distributed to the authors and printers of newspapers at least 50,077*l.* 18*s.* of the public money.¹ Pulteney, speaking in the House of Commons in 1740, openly described the writers in the Whig journals as 'a herd of wretches, whom neither information can enlighten nor affluence elevate.' 'If their patrons,' he said, 'would read their writings, their salaries would quickly be withdrawn ; for a few pages would convince them that they can neither attack nor defend, neither raise any man's reputation by their panegyric, nor destroy it by their defamation.' Walpole declared, perhaps with truth, that he did not take the trouble to examine what he so lavishly paid for. 'I do not often read the papers of either party, except when I am informed by some who have more inclination to such studies than myself that they have risen by some accident above their common level.' And he added, scornfully, 'I have never discovered any reason to exalt the authors who write against the administration to a higher degree of reputation than their opponents.'²

Stray efforts were made to improve the newspapers, even the most corrupt of which, in the natural process of growth and to meet the increasing demand for information, advanced in size and gave more actual news, true or false, than had been supplied by their forerunners. Of the fresh papers started from time to time most were merely ministerial organs, but a few aimed at independence, like 'The London Crier,' which was started in 1733 as a daily paper, 'in opposition to the booksellers, who, having all the newspapers in their hands except "The Craftsman," shut out of the said papers the advertising of everything that does not go through their hands, and endeavour to suppress by

¹ Andrews, vol. i. p. 138.

² *Parliamentary History*, vol. xi. p. 882.

all the ways in their power whatever they have not a concern in.’¹ An earlier and less ambitious but more successful venture was ‘The Grub Street Journal,’ a Thursday miscellany of literary and general news, with witty verses and bright essays interspersed, which was started in 1730 by a non-juring clergyman named Russel, and which had Pope for one of its early contributors. It was altered to ‘The Literary Courier of Grub Street’ in 1737, and lived long under that title. ‘The Champion, or The Evening Advertiser,’ commenced in 1739, is interesting because its first editor was Captain ‘Hercules Vinegar, of Pall Mall,’ whose real name was Henry Fielding. But this leads us into a later period, as also does ‘The Generous London Morning Advertiser,’ a strange daily collection of fiction not too chaste, of more or less scandalous news items and of advertisements, ‘given gratis to all who are or will become subscribers to the numbers of the Family Bible and other books published by William Raynor,’ which was started in 1739, and in 1742, ceasing to be ‘generous,’ was charged for and known as ‘Raynor’s Morning Advertiser.’

‘The Gentleman’s Magazine,’ commenced in January 1731 as a monthly miscellany, was not a newspaper, but it holds important place in the history of newspapers, as to it, in large measure, we owe the establishment of one of the principal functions of modern journalism.² Edward Cave, its enterprising projector,

¹ *Gentleman’s Magazine*, vol. iii. p. 91.

² The first number, of forty-two pages in double column, contains nineteen pages of extracts from the weekly and other papers of the previous month, a digest of home and foreign news, and some original poems and other miscellaneous matter. This arrangement was continued for some time, but gradually original matter squeezed out the reprints. ‘Newspapers are of late so multiplied,’ it was said in the prospectus, ‘as to render it impossible, unless a man makes it his business, to consult

had been connected for some years with 'Mist's Journal,' and after that had established an agency for supplying the London papers with country news at a charge of a guinea a week. He had also written news-letters for the country papers, in which he furnished some account of the proceedings in Parliament. For this latter, being a breach of privilege, he was taken into custody and reprimanded, if not otherwise punished, in March 1727. His continuance and expansion of the offence in 'The Gentleman's' helped materially to secure an important reform.

Infringement of the prerogative of parliament to conduct its business secretly, and to have no other report of that business published than it authorised or its printed minutes and acts supplied, was an old offence, for which many culprits were severely dealt with before the time of the Commonwealth, and even before any newspapers were started. The Long Parliament, as we have seen, was more gracious and reasonable, but with the Restoration the old order was revived, and all who circulated in writing or in print the least information about the speaking or voting in either house were at the mercy of any who cared to bring them to book. To check the growth of what it regarded as a serious scandal, the House of Commons, on January 23, 1722, resolved 'that no news-writers do presume, in their letters or other papers that they disperse as minutes, or under any other denomination, to intermeddle with the debates or any other proceedings of the house; also, that no printer or publisher of any printed newspaper do presume to them all. Upon calculating the number of newspapers it is found that (besides divers written accounts) no less than two hundred half-sheets per month are thrown upon the press only in London, and about as many printed elsewhere in the three kingdoms; so that they are become the chief channels of amusement and intelligence.'

insert in any such papers any debates or any other proceedings of this House or any committee thereof;¹ and like announcements were made in 1729 and at other times.

The rule was, of course, systematically broken, and a large part of so much as we know of parliamentary history, apart from actual legislation, down to the close of the eighteenth century, is derived from the illicit or grudgingly tolerated reports that were written down by members and others at their peril. In Queen Anne's reign Abel Boyer was suffered to issue in a monthly pamphlet, styled 'The Political State of Great Britain,' a meagre and cautiously worded sketch of the debates in parliament, and this publication was continued till 1735, after which it was replaced by an annual 'Historical Register,' containing a similar epitome. In 1736 Cave began to procure and to print in 'The Gentleman's Magazine' much fuller parliamentary reports than had hitherto, except on special and rare occasions, been published. His bold venture was soon imitated in 'The London Magazine,' which had been started in rivalry to 'The Gentleman's'; and the competition that ensued was helpful to the public.

These reports were at first compiled for 'The Gentleman's' by William Guthrie, destined to become a typical newspaper hack, and for 'The London' by Thomas Gordon, Trenchard's old colleague on 'The London Journal.'² They were brief but apparently accurate epitomes of the principal speeches, communicated either by the speakers themselves or by other members who had heard them. Soon, however, they gave offence, all the greater because of their popularity. In April 1738 Arthur Onslow, the Speaker of the

¹ *Journals of the House of Commons*, vol. xx. p. 98.

² *Parliamentary History*, vol. ix. preface.

House of Commons, called its attention to the practice as one that 'a little reflected on the dignity of the House,' which he invited to adopt 'some method of stopping it.' Walpole, Pulteney, and others discussed the matter in varying tones, but all agreed that this was an abuse that ought to be prevented. 'If we do not put a speedy stop to this practice,' said Sir Thomas Winnington, 'it will be looked upon without doors that we have no power to do it, for the public will very justly think that if we had such a power we would exercise it; and then, sir, what will be the consequence? Why, sir, you will have every word that is spoken here by gentlemen misrepresented by fellows who thrust themselves into our gallery. You will have the speeches of this house printed every day, and we shall be looked upon as the most contemptible assembly on the face of the earth.' That was the general opinion, and it was resolved, without a division, that it was 'a high indignity to, and a notorious breach of the privilege of, this house,' for any account of its proceedings to be printed by 'any newspaper of any denomination'; and an emphatic warning was given that 'this house will proceed with the utmost severity against such offenders.'¹

Cave, however, refused to be silenced. Hitherto he had published his reports of speeches with only the first and last letters of the speakers' names—for instance, W——e standing for Walpole. In the number of 'The Gentleman's Magazine' for June 1738 he began 'An Appendix to Captain Lemuel Gulliver's account of the famous empire of Lilliput,' which purported to give 'debates in the senate of Great Lilliput,' and in which the parliamentary speeches were reported under easily understood disguises, such as Walelup for Walpole; and

¹ *Parliamentary History*, vol. x. pp. 800-811.

the House of Commons, probably through fear of provoking further ridicule by further meddling, did not interfere with him. His Lilliput debates, rivalled by similar arrangements in 'The London' and other publications, were continued till 1752, when the old plan of printing the initial and final letters of the speakers' names was resumed without opposition.

Between November 1740 and February 1743 Cave employed Samuel Johnson as editor or author of this portion of 'The Gentleman's.' 'The debates in parliament,' says Boswell, 'which were brought home and digested by Guthrie, whose memory, though surpassed by others who have since followed him in this department, was yet very quick and tenacious, were sent by Cave to Johnson for his revision ; and after some time, when Guthrie had attained to greater variety of employment and the speeches were more and more enriched by the accession of Johnson's genius, it was resolved that he should do the whole himself from the scanty notes furnished by persons employed to attend in both houses of parliament. Sometimes, however, as he himself told me, he had nothing more communicated to him than the names of the several speakers and the parts which they had taken in the debate.'¹

In later days Johnson was inclined to take credit or to reproach himself for more invention in his reports than—as appears by comparing them with other epitomes²—they contained. When he was dining with Foote and other friends one day, conversation turned on a speech of Pitt's. 'Many of the company remembered the debate,' we are told, 'and many passages were cited from the speech, with the approbation and applause of all present. During the ardour of the conversation

¹ Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, chap. iii.

² See preface to *Parliamentary History*, vol. xii.

Johnson remained silent. When the warmth of praise subsided, he opened his mouth with these words: "That speech I wrote in a garret in Exeter Street." The company was struck with astonishment. After staring at each other for some time in silent amaze, Dr. Francis asked how that speech could be written by him. "Sir," said Johnson, "I wrote it in Exeter Street. I never was in the gallery of the House of Commons but once. Cave had interest with the doorkeeper. He and the persons under him got admittance. They brought away the subject of discussion, the names of the speakers, the side they took, and the order in which they rose, together with notes of the various arguments adduced in the course of the debate. The whole was afterwards communicated to me, and I composed the speeches in the form they now have in 'Parliamentary Debates,' for the speeches of that period are all printed from Cave's Magazine." To this discovery Dr. Francis made answer, "Then, sir, you have exceeded Demosthenes himself!" The rest of the company were lavish in their compliments to Johnson. One in particular praised his impartiality, observing that he had dealt out reason and eloquence with an equal hand to both parties. "That is not quite true, sir," said Johnson; "I saved appearances well enough, but I took good care that the Whig dogs should not have the best of it."¹

¹ Sir John Hawkins, *Life of Johnson*.

CHAPTER V.

WALPOLE'S LEGACIES.

1742—1760.

(WALPOLE'S aims were better than his methods. Coming to power when a firm hand and a shrewd head were needed to save England from the ruin with which it had been threatened in the blundering years of Whig and Tory rivalry and treachery before and after the passing of the crown from Queen Anne to George I., to establish something like order at home, and, by avoidance of foreign quarrels, to help the nation to hold its own abroad, he did his work and used his opportunities, not too honestly, but with consummate skill. We who have profited so much by his achievements must make allowances for the faults that were incident to them. His Whiggism was worthier than that of many of the Whigs around him, whom he overawed and bribed and forced to conform to his policy ; and it was yet worthier than that of the Tories, whom he crippled and coerced, and who, more shameless in their trickery, were wholly unpatriotic alike in their objects and in their plans for reaching them. Even journalism gained as well as lost by his treatment of it, and if the vices he encouraged were continued under the ministers who succeeded him—Carteret for a year, Pelham for eleven years, Newcastle for three, and after that the older Pitt—it largely owed to him much of the virtue it was acquiring.)

The most notable figure in newspaper history during the second half of George II.'s reign was that of Henry Fielding, who, however, being a novelist and a playwright far more than he was a journalist, had much less actual connection with newspapers than some hundreds of his contemporaries. Fielding, who settled in London in 1727 when he was twenty, and, as he told his cousin Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, 'had no choice but to be a hackney writer or a hackney coachman,' and who, as Lady Mary said, 'would have approached much nearer to Congreve's excellences, if not forced by his necessities to publish without correction, and throw many productions into the world he would have thrown into the fire if meat could have been got without money or money without scribbling,'¹ had scribbled much before November 1739, when he started 'The Champion,' of course with some one else's money, and with one James Ralph for his colleague. 'The Champion,' published on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, and giving in each number an 'index to the times' in the shape of briskly written items of news, as well as lively articles purporting to be by 'Captain Hercules Vinegar, of Pall Mall,' supported Walpole in his opposition to the movement for involving England in the Spanish war then raging. But, though 'The Champion' continued for some time longer, Fielding's employment on it seems to have lasted only about half a year, and we next meet with him as a newspaper writer in 'The True Patriot and the History of our Own Times,' which was started on November 5, 1745.

Much had happened in the interval. Walpole, forced by popular opinion to consent to join in the war, when he exclaimed, 'They may ring their bells now, but they will soon be wringing their hands,' gradually

¹ Lady M. W. Montagu, *Letters and Works*, vol. iii. pp. 93, 94.

lost his influence, and had to retire from office in February 1742, accepting sham dignity as Earl of Orford, which he bore uneasily during three years before his death ; and Carteret was actual premier under the nominal headship of the venerable Spencer Compton, Lord Wilmington, until the latter's death in July 1743, when the Pelham administration began. Henry Pelham, a staunch adherent of the Walpole policy, was nominee of the dying but still powerful Earl of Orford, and till 1754 he undertook to act, under other conditions, on his friend's instructions. His chief rival was the first William Pitt, the report of whose memorable speech on behalf of the Prince of Wales in 1736 Dr. Johnson claimed to have himself concocted, and a man now too eager for advancement to be very careful as to the means by which he rose. Pitt's politics were shifty, but his sympathies were at this time altogether with the Tories ; and it is to his credit that he did much to convert Toryism from Jacobitism, and to reconcile it to the new circumstances which had arisen under Walpole's guidance. The younger school of Tories called themselves Patriots, and more or less emphatically and consistently repudiated the Jacobites, who were preparing for the last spurt of rebellion which occurred in 1745. It was this new Toryism or sham Patriotism that Fielding now undertook to expose, along with much else, in 'The True Patriot.'

The introductory article of this paper says some hard things about the journalism of that day. 'In strict obedience to the sovereign power fashion,' wrote Fielding, 'being informed by my bookseller, a man of great sagacity in his business, that nobody at present reads anything but newspapers, I have resolved to conform myself to the reigning taste. The number, indeed, of these writers at first a little staggered us both ; but

upon perusal of their works I fancied a little imperfection in them all, which somewhat diminished the force of this objection.' Fielding found, in fact, three 'little imperfections'—the first, that 'there is scarce a syllable of truth in them'; the second, that 'there is no sense in them'; and the third, that 'there is in reality nothing at all in them.' 'Paragraphs which contain neither wit nor humour nor sense nor the least importance,' he urged, 'may be properly said to contain nothing. Such are the arrival of my Lord —— with a great equipage; the marriage of Miss ——, of great beauty and merit; and the death of Mr. ——, who was never heard of in his life, &c. Nor will this appear strange if we consider who are the authors of such tracts—viz. the journeymen of booksellers, of whom, I believe, much the same may be truly predicated as of these their productions. But the encouragement with which these lucubrations are read may seem more strange and more difficult to be accounted for; and here I cannot agree with my bookseller, that their eminent badness recommends them. The true reason is, I believe, simply the same which I once heard an economist assign for the content and satisfaction with which his family drank water-cider—viz. because they could procure no better liquor. Indeed, I make no doubt but that the understanding as well as the palate, though it may out of necessity swallow the worse, will in general prefer the better.'

In proposing to offer something better Fielding pretended to be more independent than he was. 'I do not live within a mile of Grub Street,' he said, 'nor am I acquainted with a single inhabitant of that place. I am of no party—a word which I hope, by these my labours, to eradicate out of our constitution, this being, indeed, the true source of all those evils which we have

reason to complain of.' The highest price hitherto charged for any newspaper had been twopence. For 'The True Patriot'—giving four large pages with three columns in each, a leader or essay generally filling one page, and being followed by a compact and classified epitome of news, and two or three columns of lively or satirical 'we hears'—a charge of threepence was made. 'I desire my reader,' Fielding said, 'to weigh fairly with himself, whether he does not gain six times the knowledge and amusement by my paper compared to any other. I leave to his determination whether threepennyworth of truth and sense is not more worth his purchasing than all the rubbish and nonsense of the week which will cost him twenty times as much.'

'The True Patriot' was not so wonderful a paper as it promised to be ; but it helped to bring the Pretender's cause into contempt, and, when this was considered to be no longer necessary, it was discontinued in April 1746. It was followed, however, by 'The Jacobite Journal,' 'by John Trott-plaid, Esq.,' which appeared every Saturday, from December 5, 1747, till November 5, 1748, when Fielding thought that he and his associates—for he does not seem to have written much in it himself—had thrown off fireworks enough to signalise the defeat of the party they mocked.

'The Jacobite Journal' was an elaborate joke which greatly amused the town while it lasted. It purported to be written in the Jacobite interest, and to set forth the folly and madness of this party in the boldest way. 'We scorn,' Mr. Trott-plaid was made to say, 'to regulate our conduct by the low documents of art and science, like the Whigs. We are governed by those higher and nobler truths which nature dictates alike to all men and to all ages ; for which reason very low clowns and young children are as good and hearty

Jacobites as the wisest among us ; for it may be said of our party as it is of poets, "Jacobita nascitur, non fit." In his fifteenth number Fielding gave what professed to be a prose translation from a lately-discovered Latin poem 'De Arte Jacobita,' commencing thus : 'Come, Tisiphone, from hell! Bring with thee ill-judging zeal and obstinate bigotry, and inspire me with all thy furies, while I teach the black art of Jacobitism!'

Fielding ridiculed much besides Jacobitism—among the rest the way in which, by use of asterisks and dashes and italics and so forth, journalists at that time were fond of writing or of emphasising their foolish statements. 'In this dress,' he said, 'I intend to abuse the * * * and the * * * ; I intend to lash not only the m—stry, but *every man* who *hath* any p—ce or p—ns—on from the g—vernm—t, or who is entrusted with *any degree* of *power* or *trust* under it, let his r—nk be ever so *high* or his ch—r—cter never so *good*. For this purpose I have provided myself with a *vast* quantity of *Italian* letter and asterisks of all sorts. And as for all the words which I *embowel*, or rather *envowel*, I will never so mangle them but that they shall be as well known as if they retained every vowel in them. This I promise myself, that when I have any meaning they shall understand it.'

If the public laughed at Fielding's humour, those against whom it was directed resented it. 'Old England, or the Broad Bottom Journal,' which had been started by William Guthrie in April 1745 and had Lord Chesterfield for one of its contributors, described the author of 'Joseph Andrews' in its number for March 3, 1748, as 'a needy vagrant who long hunted after fortunes, scored deep at taverns, abused his benefactors in the administration of public affairs, hackneyed

for booksellers and newspapers, lampooned the virtuous, ridiculed all the inferior clergy in the dry unnatural character of Parson Adams, related the adventures of footmen and wrote the lives of thief-catchers, bilked every lodging for ten years together and every alehouse and every chandler's shop in every neighbourhood, and defrauded and reviled all his acquaintances, meeting and possessing universal infamy and contempt.' And when 'The Jacobite Journal' was discontinued, 'Old England' of November 20 proposed an epitaph for its imaginary conductor—

Beneath this stone
Lies Trott-plaid John ;
His length of chin and nose,
His crazy brain,
Unhumorous vein
In verse and eke in prose.

Guthrie, who edited 'Old England,' and who had formerly been provider of the notes that Johnson worked up in the parliamentary reports of 'The Gentleman's Magazine,' was one of the most zealous scribes in the employ of the Broad Bottom Government, as it was called, of which Pelham was the head, and the discordant members of which followed Walpole's example in some respects and departed from it more and more in others. 'In the year 1745-6,' Guthrie wrote to a member of Lord Bute's administration as soon as it was formed, in June 1762, 'Mr. Pelham, then first lord of the treasury, acquainted me that it was his majesty's pleasure I should receive, till better provided for, which never has happened, 200*l.* a year to be paid by him and his successors in the treasury. I was satisfied with the august name made use of, and the appointment has been regularly and quarterly paid me ever since. I have been equally punctual in doing the government all the services that fell within my abilities or sphere of

life, especially in those critical situations that call for unanimity in the service of the crown. Your lordship may possibly now suspect that I am an author by profession. You are not deceived, and will be less so if you believe that I am disposed to serve his majesty under your lordship's future patronage and protection with greater zeal, if possible, than ever.'¹ It was a bad day for journalism when the term 'author by profession' was recognised as appropriate to one who sold whatever skill in writing he had to the men in office, and when 200*l.* a year was acceptable pay to a prominent tradesman in this line. Guthrie, however, doubtless had other sources of income, and he wrote histories as well as newspaper articles and pamphlets.

Guthrie was luckier than some others of his class. Of Amhurst, who had begun 'The Craftsman' in 1726 to carry on the Tory fight, it was said that 'after being the drudge of his party for the best part of twenty years together, he was as much forgotten in the famous compromise of 1742 as if he had never been born, and when he died of what is called a broken heart, which happened within a very few months afterwards, became indebted to the charity of his very bookseller for a grave—a grave not to be traced now because then no otherwise distinguished than by the freshness of the turf borrowed from the next common to cover it.'²

That pathetic account of Amhurst was given by James Ralph, Fielding's associate in 'The Champion' between 1739 and 1742, and afterwards for some years a busy hanger-on of the Prince of Wales's faction, which was then doing all it could to stir up mischief between George II. and his ministers and to promote confusion in the country. Ralph had been a poetaster

¹ D'Israeli, *Calamities of Authors*.

² James Ralph, *The Case of Authors*.

before he became a journalist, and had caused Pope to exclaim—

Silence, ye wolves, while Ralph to Cynthia howls,
And makes night hideous. Answer him, ye owls.¹

He was put to edit 'The Remembrancer' as an organ of the Prince of Wales in 1749, with money found by Bubb Dodington and others. According to Dodington, to whom he acted for some time as a sort of private secretary, he was 'a very honest man,' but 'ready to be hired to any cause'; and in the course of his career as a scheming intermediary between rival plotters 'he actually put himself to auction between the two contending parties—the Bedfords and Pelhams—and, after several biddings, was bought by the Pelhams.'² He died, poor and disgraced, in 1762.

In days when nearly every journalist obtained, or sought without obtaining, some post or pension as a reward for political service, it would have been strange if none had fallen to Fielding; and though the office bestowed upon him was a strange one, considering that he had no technical knowledge of the law and was himself somewhat of a vagabond, he acquitted himself worthily in it. In 1749, through the influence of his friend George Lyttelton, then a lord of the treasury, he was made a justice of the peace for Middlesex and Westminster. This work, and the writing of 'Tom

¹ *The Dunciad*, bk. iii. ll. 165, 166. Warburton says in a note: 'This low writer attended his own works with panegyrics in the journals, and once in particular praised himself highly above Mr. Addison. He was wholly illiterate and knew no language, not even French. Being advised to read the rules of dramatic poetry before he began a play, he smiled, and replied, "Shakespeare writ without rules." He ended at last in the common sink of all such writers, a political newspaper, to which he was recommended by his friend Arnall, and received a small pittance for pay.'

² *Diary of Bubb Dodington*, preface.

Jones' and 'Amelia,' gave him plenty of occupation for the remaining five years of his life; but he found time to project and write much for 'The Covent Garden Journal,' which appeared every Tuesday and Saturday from January 4 till November 25, 1752, and which soon had for a rival 'The Drury Lane Journal,' edited by Bonnell Thornton. 'The Covent Garden,' by Sir Alexander Drawcansir, knight, censor of Great Britain,' dealt with political, literary, and general matters, as well as theatrical, giving both news and comments, and was a wise and witty example of this kind of journalism in the best form then possible. In the seventy-second number, however, Fielding said, 'I shall here lay down a paper which I have neither inclination nor leisure to carry on any longer'; and he invited his readers to transfer their favour to 'The Public Advertiser,' which was to be commenced on December 1 as a new and improved series of 'The General Advertiser.'

The announcement concerning this reconstructed journal is interesting. After eighteen years of progress, say its proprietors, 'they have determined to enlarge the plan of their paper, and for that purpose have settled a real correspondence at Paris and at the Hague, in order to receive a better and more authentic account of foreign affairs than hath hitherto been transmitted, and have also taken every method in their power to procure the most early intelligence of all material transactions in Great Britain and Ireland (fit to be made public).' They take credit for having kept their columns clear of matter not 'fit to be made public,' and for never having 'indulged the liberty of aspersing the characters of particular persons.' They further announce that they 'will continue as usual the playbills of both the theatres, which are in no other paper, and all other advertisements with which the public may be pleased

to favour it.'¹ Moreover, 'Mr. Justice Fielding gives notice that all advertisements and articles which concern the public and which come from his clerk's office shall for the future be inserted in this paper only.'

What was Fielding's connection with 'The Public Advertiser' and its predecessor is not clear; but as this was the paper afterwards made especially famous by the letters of Junius, its antecedents are worth tracing. 'The Daily Post,' which, as we have seen, Defoe had a hand in starting in 1719, had continued to flourish, and it outlived 'The Daily Courant,' its older rival. Henry Woodfall, the head of a famous family of printers, became its principal proprietor in 1726, and the shares rose to such value that for one of them, 'one-third of a tenth,' 28*l.* was paid in 1737 to Theophilus Cibber by Henry Woodfall the younger.² Woodfall and his partners altered the name to 'The London Daily Post and General Advertiser,' which was again altered to 'The General Advertiser' in 1744, and became 'The Public Advertiser' at the close of 1752. 'The Daily Advertiser,' started by Matthew Jenour in 1724, to which Sir John Hill contributed between 1751 and 1753 a series of articles styled 'The Inspector,' which caused some excitement, was a separate paper; and there were others, most of them short-lived, of kindred names. One such was 'The London Advertiser and Literary Gazette,' of which the first number was published in March 1751, which informed its readers that 'custom has established it as the present plan of a paper of this kind that it consists of three distinct parts—an introductory disser-

¹ 'Before this time,' says John Bee in his *Life of Foote*, 'the newspapers—or rather one of them only—paid the theatres 200*l.* annually for *intelligence* as to what was going on at the respective houses, whereas at present nearly five times that sum, per estimate, is received by the papers for theatrical advertisements from all the houses.'

² Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. i. p. 300.

tation, articles of intelligence, and advertisements : the first is always intended to have some entertainment, the second some truth, and the third some business.'

Other new papers appeared in abundance during these years, but the low state of public morality and the vicious influences exerted upon journalism kept most honest men out of the field, or caused many of the cleverest to prefer essay writing in the style of Steele and Addison to political controversy. 'The Rambler,' which Johnson started in March 1750, was one of a large group or series of essay-sheets, including 'The Adventurer,' which Hawkesworth, who had succeeded Johnson as writer of the parliamentary reports in 'The Gentleman's Magazine,' began in April 1752 ; 'The World,' commenced in January 1753 by Edward Moore, who obtained help from Lord Chesterfield, Horace Walpole, and others ; 'The Connoisseur,' of 1754, with George Colman and Bonnell Thornton as 'Mr. Town Critic and Censor General' ; and 'The Dreamer,' edited by Dr. William King. Such papers as these were in their nature ephemeral, as also were the more political weeklies occasioned by the quickening of party strife after the death of Pelham in 1754.

The last six years of George II.'s reign were critical. Walpole's policy, both what was best and what was worst in it, had been so far departed from even by those who professed themselves his followers, that new tactics became necessary, and a political revolution was only deferred, in so far as it was deferred, while people waited for the old king's death and his grandson's accession. The ablest statesman, perhaps the only real statesman, of that day was the elder Pitt, who felt free to use his strength as soon as Pelham was out of the way, and who was master of the situation even while the Duke of Newcastle held office as premier. But the

situation was troubled, and to the perplexed public many journalists, both of the old school and of a new one, offered themselves as guides.

In November 1756, for instance, appeared the first number of 'The Test,' edited by Arthur Murphy,¹ which undertook to maintain 'the true principles of Whiggism as they were understood and felt at the glorious Revolution, as they were felt by Mr. Steele, Mr. Addison, the late Duke of Argyle, and the noble band of patriots who gloriously stepped forth in the latter end of Queen Anne's reign when a faction had surrounded the throne, and men of brilliant but dangerous parts had usurped the administration.' 'The Test' made Pitt the special object of its attack; and on November 23 it began to be opposed by 'The Con-Test,' edited in the Tory interest by Philip Francis, the translator of Horace and Demosthenes.² 'This paper,' it was announced, 'will be continued occasionally so long as the envy and prejudice of mankind shall render a "Con-Test" necessary.' It outlasted 'The Test,' which was discontinued in July

¹ Murphy started *The Gray's Inn Journal*, in the style of *The Covent Garden Journal*, in 1752. 'During the publication of *The Gray's Inn Journal*, a periodical paper which was successfully carried on by Mr. Murphy alone,' says Boswell (*Life of Johnson*, chap. xi.), 'he happened to be in the country with Mr. Foote, and having mentioned that he was obliged to go to London in order to get ready for the press one of the numbers of that journal, Foote said to him, "You need not go on that account. Here is a French magazine in which you will find a pretty Oriental tale. Translate that and send it to your printer." Mr. Murphy having read the tale, was highly pleased with it, and followed Mr. Foote's advice. When he returned to town, this tale was pointed out to him in *The Rambler*, from whence it had been translated into the French magazine. Mr. Murphy then waited upon Johnson to explain this curious incident. His talents, literature, and gentlemanlike manners were soon perceived by Johnson, and a friendship was formed which was never broken.' Murphy, who was not very successful as a playwright, was rewarded for his political writing with a commissionership of bankruptcy. He translated Tacitus and wrote a *Life of Garrick*.

² Francis, whose *Con-Test* won him the chaplaincy of Chelsea Hospital, was the father of Sir Philip Francis.

1757. Murphy, however, produced 'The Auditor,' again in opposition to Pitt, in January 1762. A more important paper, 'The Monitor,' begun in 1755, will be mentioned hereafter.

Papers of a different sort were 'The London Chronicle,' appearing thrice a week, which was started by Dodsley in 1756 ; and 'The Universal Chronicle or Weekly Gazette,' which was started by Newberry in April 1758. For the former Johnson wrote the preliminary article, being paid a guinea for it, and two or three others. To the latter he contributed the series of essays afterwards re-issued as 'The Idler.' These essays were inserted in 'The Universal Chronicle' on the plea that 'the occurrences of the week were not sufficient to fill the columns,' but they at once became its chief attraction, and Johnson had, in January 1759, to prepare an advertisement warning the publishers of other papers who had 'with so little regard to justice or decency' reprinted them into their own columns without permission or acknowledgment, that 'the time of impunity was at an end.' 'Whoever,' he said, 'shall, without our leave, lay the hand of rapine upon our papers, is to expect that we shall vindicate our due by the means which justice prescribes and which are warranted by the immemorial prescriptions of honourable trade. We shall lay hold in our turn on their copies, degrade them from the pomp of wide margin and diffuse typography, contract them into a narrow space, and sell them at a humble price ; yet not with a view of growing rich by confiscations, for we think not much better of money got by punishment than by crimes.' ¹

¹ Though Johnson was reasonably proud of his essays, he was also, according to Boswell, proud of the speed with which he turned them off. 'Mr. Langton remembers Johnson, when on a visit to Oxford, asking

Though Johnson wrote for newspapers, he sneered at them. 'One of the principal amusements of the Idler,' he said, 'is to read the works of those minute historians, the writers of news, who, though contemptuously overlooked by composers of bulky volumes, are yet necessary in a nation where much wealth produces much leisure, and one part of the people has nothing to do but to observe the lives and fortunes of the other. To us, who are regaled every morning and evening with intelligence, and are supplied from day to day with materials for conversation, it is difficult to conceive how man can subsist without a newspaper, or to what entertainment companies can assemble in those wide regions of the earth that have neither "Chronicles" nor "Magazines," neither "Gazettes" nor "Advertisers," neither "Journals" nor "Evening Posts." All foreigners remark that the knowledge of the common people of England is greater than that of any other vulgar. This superiority we undoubtedly owe to the rivulets of intelligence which are continually trickling among us, which every one may catch, and of which every one partakes.' And he added more severely : 'The compilation of newspapers is often committed to narrow and mercenary minds, not qualified for the task of delighting or instructing, who are content to fill their paper with whatever matter is at hand, without industry to gather or discernment to select. Thus journals are daily multiplied without increase of knowledge. The tale of the morning paper is told in the evening, and the narratives of the evening are brought out again in

him one evening how long it was till the post went out, and, on being told about half an hour, he exclaimed, "Then we shall do very well!" He, upon this, instantly sat down and finished an *Idler*, which it was necessary should be in London the next day. Mr. Langton having signified a wish to read it, "Sir," said he, "you shall do no more than I have done myself." He then folded it up and sent it off.'—*Life of Johnson*, chap. x.

the morning. These repetitions, indeed, waste time, but they do not shorten it. The most eager peruser of news is tired before he has completed his labour, and many a man who enters the coffee-house in his night-gown and slippers is called away to his shop or his dinner before he has well considered the state of Europe.' ¹ 'In Sir Henry Wotton's jocular definition,' Johnson wrote in angrier mood, 'an ambassador is said to be a man of virtue sent abroad to tell lies for the advantage of his country. A news-writer is a man without virtue who writes lies at home for his own profit. To these compositions is required neither genius nor knowledge, neither industry nor sprightliness, but contempt of shame and indifference to truth are absolutely necessary.'²

Samuel Foote, the great theatrical manager of that day, and a prolific writer of comedies smart enough to please the town, satirised the baser sort of pressmen in many of his pieces. In one of them, for instance, *Margin*, an editor, is congratulating himself on the growth of his circulation from 1,230 copies in September to 2,006 in June—'good increase for the time, considering, too, that the winter has been pretty pacific; dabbled but little in treasons, and not remarkably scurrilous, unless, indeed, in a few personal cases'—when his 'authors,' *Pepper*, *Plaster*, *Rumour*, *O'Flam*, *Forge'em*, *Fibber*, and others, come in for instructions. The first two are political writers by profession, but *Margin* proposes other work to them for the present.

Margin. As both the Houses are up, I shall adjourn your political warfare till their meeting again.

Pepper. Don't you think the public would bear one skirmish more before we close the campaign? I have a trimmer here in my hand.

Plaster. To which I have as tart a retort.

Margin. No, no; enough for the present. It is, *Plaster*, the proper

¹ *The Idler*, May 27, 1758.

² *Ibid.*, November 11, 1758.

timing the subject that gives success to our labours. The conductor of a newspaper, like a good cook, should always serve things in their season. Who eats oysters in June? Plays and parliament houses are winter provisions.

Pepper. Then half the satire and salt will be lost. Besides, if the great man should happen to die or go out?

Margin. Pshaw! it will do as well for the great man that comes in. Political papers should bear vamping, like sermons. Change but the application and text, and they will suit all persons and seasons.

Plaster. True enough; but, meantime, what can we turn to? for we shall be quite out of work.

Margin. I warrant you, if you are not idle, there's business enough. The press teems with fresh publications—histories, translations, voyages—and what with letters from Paris or Spa, inundations, elopements, dismal effects of thunder and lightning, remarkable causes at country assizes, and with changing the ministry now and then, you will have employment enough for the summer.

Plaster. And so enter upon our old trade in the winter.

Margin. Ay; or, for variety, as it must be tiresome to take always one side, you, Pepper, may go over to administration, and Plaster will join opposition. The novelty may, perhaps, give fresh spirits to both.

Pepper. With all my heart. A bold writer has now no encouragement to sharpen his pen. I have known the day when there was no difficulty in getting a lodging in Newgate, but now, all I can say won't procure me a warrant from a Westminster justice.

Margin. You say right; hard times, Master Pepper, for persecution is the very life and soul of our trade. But don't despair. Who knows how soon matters may mend?

Then Rumour and O'Flam, 'collectors of paragraphs,' are called up.

Margin. Well, Rumour, what have you brought for the press?

Rumour. I have been able to bring no *positives*.

Margin. How? no *positives*?

Rumour. Not one. I have a *probability* from the Court end of the town, and two good *supposes* out of the city.

Margin. Hand them here. [*Reads*]. 'It is probable that if the King of Prussia should join the Tsarina, France would send a fleet into the Mediterranean, which, by giving umbrage to the maritime powers, will involve Spain by its family compact; to which if Austria should refuse to accede, there may be a powerful diversion in Poland, made conjointly by Sweden and Denmark; and, if Sardinia and Sicily abide by the treaties, the German princes can never be neuter; Italy will become the seat of war, and all Europe be soon set in a flame.' Vastly well, Master Rumour, finely confused and very alarming. [*To clerk*]. Dingey, give him a shilling for this. I hope no other paper has got it?

Rumour. O, fie, did you ever know me guilty of such a——

Margin. True, true. Now let us see your supposes. [*Reads.*] 'It is supposed, if Alderman Mango should surrender his gown, he will be succeeded by Mr. Deputy Drylips; and, if my Lord Mayor should continue ill of the gout, it is supposed swan-hopping will cease for the season.' That last suppose is fudged in. Why, would you cram these upon me for a couple?

Rumour. As distinct as can be.

Margin. Fie, remember our bargain. You agreed to do the Court of Aldermen always for sixpence.

Rumour. What, if a Common Hall should be called?

Margin. O, then you are to have threepence a motion; I know that very well; I am sure no gentleman can accuse me of being sneaking. Dingey, give him sixpence for his supposes. Well, Phelim O'Flam, any deaths in your district?

O'Flam. The devil a one.

Margin. How, none?

O'Flam. O, yes, a parcel of nobodies that died worth nothing at all; fellows that can't pay for a funeral. Upon my conscience, I can't think what becomes of the folks. For my part, I believe all the people who live in town fall down dead in the country; and then, too, since Dr. Despatch is gone to Bath, patients linger so long.

Margin. Indeed!

O'Flam. To be sure they do. Why, I waited at the Jolly Topers a matter of two days and a half for the last breath of Lady Di Dropsy, for fear some other collector should catch it. Mr. Margin, I shall quit the mortality walk, so provide yourself as soon as you can.

Margin. I hope not.

O'Flam. Why, what will I do? I am sure the deaths won't keep me alive. You see I am already stripped to my shroud. Since November, the suicide season, I have not got salt to my porridge.¹

That and Foote's other sketches of newspaper men were, of course, grotesque exaggerations; but there was a measure of truth in them, and they show that in the middle of the eighteenth century journalism had made considerable progress towards some of the faults and failings that unfair critics tell us are peculiar to the nineteenth.

¹ Foote, *The Bankrupt*, act iii. scene 2. This amusing play was not produced till 1773, and some of the passages quoted above were evidently prompted by the press prosecutions referred to in the next chapter. In the main, however, it was doubtless quite as correct for George II.'s as for George III.'s reign.

CHAPTER VI.

WILKES AND JUNIUS.

1755—1772.

THOUGH English newspapers had been growing during nearly a century and a half before the reign of George III. began, their modern history only dates from that reign, and their recent progress has been in large measure due to the new contest, or the old contest under new conditions, forced upon them as champions of popular rights and exponents of public opinion in opposition to the efforts of the crown and its advisers to maintain an authority, and perpetuate institutions, that were becoming intolerable to the nation. The mysterious author of the letters of Junius was the ablest and most memorable warrior in this journalistic struggle, but the war, lasting long after he ceased to write, was commenced before he took up the pen, and before George III. occupied the throne.

When, with Henry Pelham's death in March 1754, the 'Broad Bottom Administration,' of which he had been the capable head, came to an end, George II. exclaimed, 'Now I shall have no more peace'; and to others besides the old king the trouble was great. Under Pelham's management of affairs the long feud between Whigs and Tories had been brought to a pause. Sir Robert Walpole's policy had been so firmly established in principle and so much altered in practice,

that, while wide differences of opinion and yet wider differences in tactics arose among those who called themselves Whigs, there were not many left who chose to call themselves Tories, and of these only a few held to the traditions of Harley and St. John. Jacobitism had been stamped out with the crushing of the rebellion of 1745, and the new Toryism that was to be strong under the guidance of the younger Pitt had not yet shaped itself. The elder Pitt was Pelham's ablest survivor, and an abler man than Pelham; but now he claimed to be a Whig, and, if not particularly honest, and less consistent than he was honest, he was too democratic and too patriotic to be liked by the Whigs who held him in awe. These other Whigs were nearly all of them contemptible place-seekers, full of a mercenary greed that Pitt in no way shared with them. Forty years' experience on the other hand had convinced the Tories that, all attempts to effect a Stuart restoration being futile, their only chance of influencing public affairs, and of forcing their way into office, was in accepting the Hanoverian succession and much else which their fathers had resented. They had been avowed malcontents, underhand plotters, and open-mouthed preachers of sedition, throughout Walpole's time and Pelham's, and, George II. being now more than seventy years old, they waited impatiently, and with not a little anxiety, to see what benefits they and their cause might get from the impending change of monarchs. For this change they had to wait more than six years, during which the young Prince of Wales was kept in such seclusion that few could tell what line he would take, although much was hoped from the known leanings of the prince's tutor or governor, the Marquis of Bute, and the known influence of this disreputable nobleman over the prince's lately widowed mother.

That was the state of things while the Duke of Newcastle and the elder Pitt, separately or jointly, administered the nation's affairs after 1754; and it was by way of putting a newspaper check on the schemers at court that 'The Monitor' was started in August 1755, and carried on a brave war during more than six years, before and after George III.'s accession. From the dedication of the first volume we learn that 'The Monitor' was originated—that is, apparently, the necessary money was found for it—by Richard Beckford, alderman of Farringdon Without, and member of parliament for Bristol, who seems to have been a younger brother of the more celebrated Alderman William Beckford, who was member for London in two parliaments and thrice lord mayor before his death in 1770. Richard Beckford died in 1756;¹ but his political opinions were steadily maintained in 'The Monitor,' which had for its editor John Entinck, who wrote a 'History of London,' and compiled a Latin Dictionary with which some schoolboys are still familiar.

The task that 'The Monitor' took upon itself was 'to commend good men and good measures, and to censure bad ones, without respect of persons, and to awaken the spirit of liberty and loyalty for which the British nation was anciently distinguished, but which was in a manner lulled asleep by that golden opiate which weak and wicked ministers for many years had too successfully tendered to persons of all ranks as a necessary engine of government, though, in truth, nothing less than a libel upon their own measures, which could not be justified upon principles of wisdom and integrity.' In its pages there were to be 'no sarcastical reflections upon majesty, no seeds of disaffection, no imputations to persons without evident facts or

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. xxvi. p. 91.

probabilities to support them, no attempts to weaken the hands of government, no wilful misrepresentation of men and measures, or the least design to impose upon the understanding of the people'; but 'a dutiful regard shown to the prince upon the throne, without foolish and fulsome flattery, a true zeal for a Protestant succession and for a religious observance of the Act of Settlement, a manly reprehension of ministers when they do amiss, a modest panegyric upon them when they act wisely; which proves that the controversy is not about men, but measures, and that party is entirely out of the design.'

'The Monitor' was not a newspaper in the sense of a paper supplying news. It was a six-paged folio, furnishing each Saturday as forcible a political essay as Entinck could write or get written for him, somewhat on the plan adopted long before by Steele and Addison, and now followed by Johnson and others, but unlike most of these, and following the example of Defoe, and more recently of Fielding, when he was grave, in sticking to politics, and keeping clear of social and literary subjects. England, when it started, was about to embark, under Pitt's guidance, in the Seven Years' War, and was grievously hampered in its progress by squabbles and jealousies of statesmen, courtiers, and adventurers of every sort. 'We are on the brink of two precipices,' it was boldly asserted in the first number, 'chained by a most heavy debt and other great and imminent dangers from within, and just on the point of war with a great and powerful enemy, the event of which may determine our being as a free and independent nation. Nothing less than a vigorous exertion of our natural rights, and unanimous consensus, with the divine assistance, in the defence of our liberties, king, and country, can prevent us from sinking under

the weight of such multiplied and growing evils.' 'Let us endeavour,' it urged, 'to restore the integrity of government, and root up corruption, the principal source from which all our domestic evils have sprung.'

In that temper 'The Monitor' entered on its self-appointed mission, and it persevered in it during the remainder of the Duke of Newcastle's administration, through the years in which Pitt was premier, and for some time after. Fearlessly discussing the week's events, and illustrating its views by appeals to history and the teachings of philosophers, it delighted and instructed a large section of the London public, and became a terror to ministers, and yet more to the dishonest schemers who were out of the ministry, and who, while Pitt was in office, gathered more and more round the Earl of Bute.

'Lord Bute called on me, and we had much talk about setting up a paper,' wrote the fussy and unscrupulous Bubb Dodington on December 20, 1760.¹ That was only seven weeks after George III. had become king, three months before Bute had forced himself into a secretaryship of state, and seventeen months before he considered himself strong enough to usurp the premiership. If, throughout this interval, there was much or frequent 'talk about setting up a paper' in opposition to 'The Monitor,' there was nothing but talk till after May 22, 1762, on which day, rumour having anticipated Bute's *coup d'état* of the following week, 'The Monitor' came out with an article of special vehemence, not naming the usurper, but clearly pointing at him, and tendering some plain advice and warning to the young king. 'A wise prince,' it said, 'ought to resolve never to give himself up totally to those he advances to power. His prudence will call

¹ Bubb Dodington's *Diary*, p. 219.

upon him to distrust the smallest beginnings, and preserve him from the temptation of superficial qualities. He will show a confirmed hatred to flattery, and won't allow anything but truth and justice to influence his actions, and he will be persuaded in his own mind that, if he does not preserve a love of truth, and show a particular regard to those who are capable and honest enough to tell it to him, he shall sooner or later be delivered by divine justice into the hands of a favourite that shall make the people mourn, and eclipse the glory of the crown.' This and much more to the same effect was stronger language than Bute and his friends could meekly submit to. They took counsel together, and on May 29, just a week after the publication of this direct attack upon them in 'The Monitor,' the first number of 'The Briton' was issued.

The editor chosen for 'The Briton' was Tobias Smollett — an unwise choice, for Smollett, skilful novelist though he was, was a very unskilful controversialist, and had already, in 'The Critical Review,' which he started in 1756, shown that he could neither write smartly on matters of fact nor substitute fiction for fact in such ways as to save himself from fine or imprisonment for his slanders. He was a hard-working Tory hack, however, and, as he was often reminded by his enemies, even if he did not often remind his employers, a Scotchman with special claims on the Scotchmen now in power. He was also proficient in the vocabulary of vituperation. In his first number, announcing that the purpose of 'The Briton' was to oppose and expose and depose 'The Monitor,' he described it as 'a paper so devoid of all merit in the execution that the author, conscious of his own unimportance and incapacity, seems to have had recourse in despair to the only expedient which he thought would give him any chance

for engaging the public, to insinuation against the throne and abuse of the ministry.' 'He has undertaken the vilest work of the worst incendiary,' Smollett said; and much else of the same sort followed in the thirty-seven other numbers of 'The Briton' which were published. Entinck retaliated with a scornful expression of 'that contempt in which he holds a paper whose existence depends on forced interpretations, ingenious misapplications, and insidious provocations.'¹ The public seems to have shared this contempt. We have it on the authority of a contemporary that, of 'The Briton,' 'the number printed was but 250, which was as little as could be printed with respect to the saving of the expense.'² The only importance of 'The Briton' is in the fact that it brought John Wilkes into the field.

Wilkes was now in his thirty-fifth year. Being of a well-to-do dissenting family, and his father, we are told, being 'so much attached to Revolution principles that, in order to escape from the possible contagion of a political stain, the son was not allowed to complete his education at either of the English universities,'³ he had been strictly brought up, and married, when he was twenty-two, to a rich and pious lady ten years his senior, whose mother for some time kept house for the ill-assorted couple. Wilkes, who was noted even as a schoolboy as 'a sprightly and entertaining fellow,' though of 'ugly countenance,'⁴ found home life irksome under such conditions, and soon became a conspicuous member of the profligate gang of young Whigs and Tories who ignored politics in their pursuit of pleasure while Pitt and others of their elders were engrossed in

¹ *The Monitor*, No. 360, June 12, 1762.

² Almon, *Review of Lord Bute's Administration*, p. 55.

³ Stephens, *Memoirs of J. Horne Tooke*, vol. i. p. 89.

⁴ *Autobiography of the Rev. Dr. Carlyle*, p. 168.

the game of party. Sir Francis Dashwood and Lord Sandwich were rivals for the leadership in this lewd company, and Wilkes hung on to them till he quarrelled with both, and gave mortal offence to Sandwich by a practical joke that had the result, for a time, of convincing the blaspheming earl that a baboon which jumped out of a box and leapt on to his shoulders, in response to his invocation of the devil, was Satan himself.¹

Wilkes's private life was at no stage blameless from a modern viewpoint, and when he became a politician he cannot be credited with worthier motives than prompted most of his neighbours. He attached himself to Pitt, who helped him to a seat in the parliament elected in 1757, in consideration of his paying the premier's election expenses at Bath as well as his own at Aylesbury, and he looked for some more substantial reward than the honour of being made high sheriff of Buckinghamshire and colonel of the Bucks regiment of militia. 'My ambition will ever be,' he wrote, 'to have my parliamentary conduct approved by the ablest minister, as well as the first character, of the age. I live in the hope of doing my country some small services at least, and I am sure the only certain way of doing any is by a steady support of your measures.'² Wilkes had influence enough to get Dr. Johnson's black servant excused from the sailor-slavery for which he had been pressed—this favour being asked in 1759 by Smollett, to whom Johnson had applied, 'though he and I were never cater-cousins,' and who said in his letter, 'You know what matter of animosity the said Johnson has against you, and I dare say you desire no other opportunity of resenting it than that of laying

¹ Charles Johnstone, *Chrysal*, vol. iii. pp. 231-249.

² *Chatham Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 239.

him under an obligation.'¹ But it was easier to do such small services to his neighbours than to obtain lucrative employment under the crown for himself; and Wilkes failed when he applied first for the ambassadorship at Constantinople, and afterwards for the governorship of Quebec, which had just been wrested from the French, and where 'his ambition,' he said, was 'to have reconciled the new subjects to the English, and to have shown the French the advantage of the mild rule of laws over that of lawless power and despotism.'² Wilkes attributed both failures to the Earl of Bute, now secretary of state, and anxious to bestow all offices of trust and profit on Tories and Scotchmen; and, though Wilkes's patriotism was as honest as that of most men, it cannot be doubted that it owed much to personal pique. Had accident so guided him to either course, he might have continued a mere dissolute man of the world like Sandwich and Dashwood, or he might have developed into a 'constitutional' politician in Pitt's train. Instead of that he started 'The North Briton,' and became a great demagogue.

'Briton,' it should be noted, was the title that at that time the Tories of the Bute school chose to apply to themselves. 'Born and bred in this country, I glory in the name of Briton,' they made George III. say, in opening his first parliament, 'and the peculiar happiness of my life will ever consist in promoting the welfare of a people whose loyalty and warm affection I consider as the greatest and most permanent security of

¹ Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, ch. x. Johnson's animosity had been partly caused by Wilkes's joke at his expense, with reference to the statement in the *Dictionary* that 'H seldom, perhaps never, begins any but the first syllable.' 'The author of this observation,' remarked Wilkes, 'must be a man of quick apprehension, and of a most comprehensive genius.'

² Rae, *Wilkes, Sheridan, Fox*, p. 17.

my throne ; ' and the House of Lords meekly answered, ' We are penetrated with the condescending and endearing manner in which your majesty has expressed your satisfaction at having received your birth and education among us. What a lustre does it cast on the name of Briton, when you, sire, are pleased to esteem it among your glories ! ' Wilkes, and many others with him, thought otherwise.

' The Briton ' having appeared on May 29, 1762, the same day on which Bute formally assumed the premiership, with Sir Francis Dashwood—who, according to Horace Walpole, ' with the familiarity and phrase of a fishwife, introduced the humours of Wapping behind the veil of the treasury ' ¹—as his chancellor of the exchequer and Sandwich as his first lord of the admiralty, ' The North Briton ' appeared a week later, on June 5. ' The liberty of the press,' wrote Wilkes in his first paragraph, ' is the birthright of a Briton, and is justly esteemed the firmest bulwark of the liberties of this country. It has been the terror of all bad ministers ; for their dark and dangerous designs, or their weakness, inability, and duplicity, have thus been detected, and shown to the public generally in too strong colours for them long to bear up against the odium of mankind.' He went on to acknowledge the good work that had been done by ' The Monitor,' and to declare himself a warrior in the same fight. As those he undertook to do battle with impudently called themselves Britons, being only Scotchmen, he thought it well to retaliate by calling himself a North Briton ; but, ' though I am a North Briton,' he said, ' I will endeavour to write plain English, and to avoid the numerous Scotticisms " The Briton " abounds with ; and then, as the world is apt to mistake, he may be taken for a Scotsman, and I

¹ *Memoirs of the Reign of George III.*, vol. i. p. 171.

shall pass as an Englishman.' Wilkes promised, moreover, to provide something more interesting and instructive than 'this foolish Briton,' that 'proceeds to produce himself amidst the parade of pompous professions and vile alliterations.' 'I thank my stars,' he added, 'that I am a North Briton, with this almost singular circumstance belonging to me, that I am unplaced and unpensioned ; but I hope this reproach will soon be wiped away, and that I shall no longer be pointed at by my sneering countrymen.' And in the second number, 'I cannot conceal the joy I feel as a North Briton, and I heartily congratulate my dear countrymen on our having at length accomplished the great, long-sought, and universally national, object of all our wishes, the planting of a Scotsman at the head of the English Treasury.' Bute was here roundly abused by name, and Smollett was more than hinted at. 'The poor "Briton" deserves something—I will not name what—for sacrificing at the shrine of Bute grammar, conscience, and common sense, for his lordship's glorification.'

There was too much personality, sometimes very coarse, in 'The North Briton' ; too much abuse of the Scotch and their habits ; but it was pungently written, and it answered its purpose. For the first time in English journalism public men were openly criticised and attacked, even 'The Monitor' having adopted the old-fashioned pretence of concealment by referring to the Earl of B-te, Mr. F-x, the Min-y, and so forth, instead of Bute, Fox, and Ministry. There was no pretence about Wilkes, apart from the transparent subterfuge of his calling himself a North Briton, and his assumption of more political virtue than he possessed. In his fifth number, alluding as he often did afterwards, to the current scandal as to the too close intimacy

between Bute and the king's mother, he compared the former to Roger Mortimer and the latter to Queen Isabella, 'actuated by strong passions, and influenced by an insolent minister.' A fair sample of his humour is in the seventh number, where he wrote, 'Some time since died Mr. John Bull, a very worthy, plain, honest old gentleman, of Saxon descent. He was choked by inadvertently swallowing a thistle, which he had placed by way of ornament on the top of his salad. For many years before he had enjoyed a remarkable good state of health.'

Wilkes did not write all 'The North Briton' himself. Several of his friends contributed occasional articles for him, and his chief assistant was Charles Churchill, the satirical poet whose misfortune it was to have been planted in life as a clergyman. Churchill found verse-writing easier than prose, and his fierce and pathetic 'Prophecy of Famine' was the poetical rendering of an article which he wrote for 'The North Briton' but did not like well enough as such to allow it to be printed.¹ One of Horace Walpole's sneering references was to 'Wilkes, as spotless as Sallust, and the flamen Churchill knocking down the foes of Britain with the statues of the gods.' We may guess that it was Churchill who wrote the scathing article on men of his cloth which appeared in the tenth number of 'The North Briton.' 'The ecclesiastics,' it was there said, 'are an artful, subtle, and powerful body in all countries. Their eyes, however dim to other things, are remarkably quick to everything which concerns their own interests. They are generally proud, revengeful, and implacable; and yet most of them have the art to throw a veil over their evil qualities and establish an interest in the opinions of the people.'

¹ Forster, *Historical and Biographical Essays*, vol. ii. p. 259.

The twelfth number contained some smart criticism of Dr. Johnson, on whom, four weeks before the article was written, Lord Bute had bestowed a pension of 300*l.* a year. Churchill—if it was Churchill who wrote the article, as Johnson supposed when he said, ‘I called the fellow a blockhead at first, and I will call him a blockhead still’¹—turned to the Doctor’s ‘Dictionary’ to see what it said about pensions and pensioners. ‘His definition of a pension,’ Johnson was cruelly reminded, ‘is “an allowance made to anyone without an equivalent: in England it is generally understood to mean pay given to a state hireling for treason to his country.”’ And under the word “pensioner” we read: “(1) One who is supported by an allowance paid at the will of another: a dependent; (2) A slave of state hired by a stipend to obey his master.” But, with submission to this great prodigy of learning, I should think both definitions very erroneous. Is the said Mr. Johnson “a dependent”? or is he “a slave of state, hired by a stipend to obey his master”? There is, according to him, no alternative. Is his pension understood to be “pay given to a state hireling for treason to his country”?’

If the number containing this attack on Johnson was written by Churchill, Wilkes had to fight a duel on account of it—not with Johnson, but with Lord Talbot, who was celebrated for his niggardliness in dispensing the ample funds allowed to him for the public service. ‘I must admire many of his lordship’s regulations, especially those for the royal kitchen,’ it was scornfully remarked. ‘I approve the discharging of so many turnspits and cooks, who were grown of very little use. I do not, however, quite like the precedent of giving them pensions for doing nothing. It was

¹ *Boswell*, ch. xiii.

high time to put an end to that too great indulgence in eating and drinking which went by the name of old English hospitality, when the House of Commons had granted a poor niggardly civil list of only 800,000*l*. I sincerely venerate his lordship's great abilities, and deeply regret that they were not employed by government in a way more confidential, more suited to his manly character.' For printing those sneers Wilkes was challenged to meet Lord Talbot at Bagshot for mortal combat on October 8, and the duel came off, but neither party was hurt in the encounter.

'The Briton,' not being deemed strong enough, in Smollett's hands, to fight against both 'The Monitor' and 'The North Briton,' another Tory paper, 'The Auditor,' was started on June 10, and edited by Arthur Murphy, who had entered Lord Bute's service since the days when he had attacked the Tories in 'The Test.' But 'The Auditor' lived only eight months. Its last number was issued on February 8, 1763, 'The North Briton' having, in anticipation of its demise, produced an epitaph for it ten days before :—

Deep in this bog 'The Auditor' lies still ;
His labours finished, and worn out his quill,
His fires extinguished, and his works unread,
In peace he sleeps with the forgotten dead.
With heath and sedge, oh, may his tomb be dressed,
And his own turf lie light upon his breast.

'The Briton,' surviving its partner by less than a week, died on February 12. 'The North Briton,' on the other hand, gained in popularity, and became bolder in its attacks on Lord Bute's administration every week. Its general attitude was shown by an article on November 6, 1762, deprecating the prorogation of parliament before it was informed of the terms on which the Seven Years' War was being concluded, and condemning the

government for proposing to take so unpatriotic and unconstitutional a step. 'What !' Wilkes exclaimed, 'on the eve of a peace, and of such a peace as must either establish or ruin us for ever (for in our present situation, loaded as we are with an enormous debt, there appears no alternative), shall the great council of the nation be postponed ? True it is that, although they supply the sinews of the war, they have no right to make a peace ; but they have an undoubted right of examining into the peace when made, and, if it shall be found dishonourable and disadvantageous (a circumstance well deserving serious consideration at this time), they have an undoubted right of calling the advisers of it to a severe account.' And to emphasise his remarks, Wilkes aptly applied to Lord Bute the words that Shakespeare makes Prince John address to Archbishop Scroop :—

That man that sits within a monarch's heart,
And ripens in the sunshine of his favour,
Would he abuse the countenance of the king,
Alack ! what mischiefs might he set abroad
In shadow of such greatness !¹

Despite the protests of 'The North Briton,' parliament was adjourned ; but it reassembled on November 25, in ample time to discuss the conclusion of the Seven Years' War ; and, notwithstanding Pitt's eloquent denunciations, the result of royal and courtly pressure upon members was that the ministerial policy was approved by a majority of five to one. 'Now indeed, my son is king !' George III.'s mother exclaimed on hearing of the result : and George III.'s scheme of absolutism was undoubtedly advanced by the undignified peacemaking ; but the nation, especially the citizens of London, did not agree with the House of Commons,

¹ *Henry IV.*, second part, act iv. scene 2.

and Bute's unpopularity so increased that he was forced to resign the premiership on April 8, 1763. 'The North Briton' had had no small share in bringing about his downfall, and much exultation on the subject might have been looked for in the No. 45 which was due on the very next day, the 9th of the month.

No. 45 was not published till the 23rd, however, and then it dealt with other matters. It was not unusual in those times for the weekly and other papers to issue occasional supplements or special numbers treating of questions that had arisen in the interval of the regular issues, or were thought more suitable for separate treatment; and of this sort was 'A North Briton Extraordinary,' of exceptional length, which was printed and ready for publication on April 7, but, for some reason not given, was suppressed. It was an elaborate and outspoken criticism of the policy of the East India Company, under which Clive and his associates had lately begun to acquire a new empire for England, and was probably written or inspired by Wilkes's friend, William Beckford, who was now both lord mayor and member of parliament for London, and a great authority on East Indian concerns. Wilkes and his friends appear to have thought it best at the last moment, and in view of the impending political crisis at home, to hold back this journalistic firebrand. At any rate it was not published; and, more than that, instead of issuing his No. 45 on the proper day for it, Wilkes prepared an advertisement, which appeared in the daily papers of April 13, stating that, 'in the present unsettled and fluctuating state of the administration, "The North Briton" is really fearful of falling into involuntary errors, and he does not wish to mislead; all his reasonings have been built on the strong foundation of facts, and he is not yet informed of the whole interior state of

government with such minute precision as now to venture the submitting of his crude ideas of the present political crisis to the discerning public.'

'The Scottish minister,' Wilkes added, 'has indeed retired. Is his influence at an end? or does he still govern by the three wretched tools of his power who, to their indelible infamy, have supported the most odious of his measures—the late ignominious peace, and the wicked extension of the arbitrary mode of excise? "The North Briton" has been steady in his opposition to a single insolent, incapable, despotic minister, and is equally ready, in the service of his country, to combat the triple-headed Cerberean administration, if the Scot is to assume that motley form. By him every arrangement to this hour has been made. It therefore seems clear to a demonstration that he intends only to retire into that situation which he held before he took the seals—I mean the dictating to every part of the king's administration. "The North Briton" desires to be understood as having pledged himself a firm and intrepid assertor of the rights of his fellow-subjects and of the liberties of Whigs and Englishmen.'

That announcement was tolerably explicit, and may be accepted as truthful. On first hearing of Lord Bute's resignation of the premiership, Wilkes may have hoped that a real change of ministerial policy would follow, especially as the new premier was George Grenville, the younger brother of Earl Temple, who was Wilkes's firm friend of long standing. Pitt, Temple, and others were evidently anxious to believe that Grenville was placed at the head of the government in order that a better policy than Bute had followed might be entered upon.

They were soon undeceived. Parliament was prorogued on Tuesday, April 19, and on the morning of

that day Wilkes, calling on Temple, found that Pitt was with him, and that they were discussing the king's speech, about to be read, of which Temple had obtained an early copy from his brother. Wilkes joined in the talk, and all three came to the conclusion that the document was dishonest and mischievous, and betokened most alarming intentions on the part of the government. Wilkes went home and expressed his friends' views as well as his own, though without their sanction, in the bold review of the royal message, and of the general situation, which he then wrote, and which was issued on the following Saturday as No. 45 of 'The North Briton.' Here are all the more important passages of this memorable article, and rather more than half of the whole, with the original punctuation and italics, and the Latin motto, which, according to the custom of those days, served as a text or preface :

Genus ORATIONIS atrox et vehemens, cui opponitur lenitatis et mansuetudinis.—CICERO.

THE *King's Speech* has always been considered by the legislature, and by the public at large, as the *Speech of the Minister*. It has regularly, at the beginning of every session of parliament, been referred by both houses to the consideration of a committee, and has been generally canvassed with the utmost freedom, when the minister of the crown has been obnoxious to the nation. The ministers of this free country, conscious of the undoubted privileges of so spirited a people, and with the terrors of parliament before their eyes, have ever been cautious, no less with regard to the matter, than to the expressions of *speeches*, which they have advised the sovereign to make from the throne, at the *opening* of each session. They well knew that an honest house of parliament, true to their trust, could not fail to detect the fallacious arts, or to remonstrate against the daring acts of violence committed by any minister. The Speech at the *close* of the session has ever been considered as the most *secure* method of promulgating the favourite court creed among the vulgar ; because the parliament which is the constitutional guardian of the liberties of the people, has in this case no opportunity of remonstrating, or of impeaching any wicked servant of the crown.

This week has given the public the most abandoned instance of ministerial effrontery ever attempted to be imposed on mankind. The *minister's*

speech of last Tuesday is not to be paralleled in the annals of this country. I am in doubt whether the imposition is greater on the sovereign or on the nation. Every friend of his country must lament that a prince of so many great and amiable qualities, whom England truly reveres, can be brought to give the sanction of his sacred name to the most odious measures, and to the most unjustifiable public declarations, from a throne ever renowned for truth, honour, and unsullied virtue. I am sure all foreigners, especially the king of Prussia, will hold the minister in contempt and abhorrence. He has made our sovereign declare, *My expectations have been fully answered by the happy effects which the several allies of my crown have derived from this salutary measure of the definitive Treaty. The powers at war with my good brother, the king of Prussia, have been induced to agree to such terms of accommodation, as that great prince has approved; and the success which has attended my negotiation, has necessarily and immediately diffused the blessings of peace throughout every part of Europe.* The infamous fallacy of this whole sentence is apparent to all mankind; for, it is known that the king of Prussia did not barely *approve*, but absolutely *dictated*, as conqueror, every article of the terms of peace. No advantage of any kind has accrued to that magnanimous prince from *our negotiation*, but he was basely deserted by the *Scottish* prime-minister of *England*. He was known by every court in Europe to be scarcely on better terms of friendship *here* than at *Vienna*; and he was betrayed by us in the *treaty of peace*. What a strain of insolence, therefore, is it in a minister to lay claim to what he is conscious all his efforts tended to prevent, and meanly to arrogate to himself a share in the fame and glory of one of the greatest princes the world has ever seen? . . .

The *Preliminary Articles of Peace* were such as have drawn the contempt of mankind on our wretched negotiators. All our most valuable conquests were agreed to be restored, and the *East India Company* would have been infallibly ruined by a single article of this fallacious and baneful negotiation. No hireling of the minister has been hardy enough to dispute this; yet the minister himself has made our sovereign declare, *the satisfaction which he felt at the approaching re-establishment of peace upon conditions so honourable to his crown, and so beneficial to his people.* As to the *entire approbation* of parliament, which is so vainly boasted of, the world knows how that was obtained. The large debt on the *Civil List*, already above half a year in arrear, shows pretty clearly the transactions of the winter. . . .

The minister cannot forbear, even in the *King's Speech*, insulting us with a dull repetition of the word *æconomy*. I did not expect so soon to have seen that word again, after it had been so lately exploded, and more than once, by a most numerous audience, *hissed* off the stage of our *English* theatres. It is held in derision by the *voice of the people*, and every tongue loudly proclaims the universal contempt, in which these empty professions are held by *this* nation. Let the public be informed of a single instance of *æconomy*, except indeed in the household. Is a regiment, which was completed as to its complement of officers on the *Tuesday*, and

broke on the *Thursday*, a proof of *economy*? . . . Is it not notorious, that in the reduction of the army, not the least attention has been paid to it? Many unnecessary expenses have been incurred, only to increase the power of the crown, that is, to create more lucrative jobs for the creatures of the minister. . . . Lord *Ligonier* is now no longer at the head of the army; but Lord *Bute* in effect is: I mean that every preferment given by the crown will be found still to be obtained by *his* enormous influence, and to be bestowed only on the creatures of the *Scottish* faction. The nation is still in the same deplorable state, while *he* governs, and can make the tools of *his* power pursue the same odious measures. Such a retreat, as *he* intends, can only mean that personal indemnity, which, I hope, guilt will never find from an injured nation. The negotiations of the late inglorious *peace* and the *excise*, will haunt him wherever he goes, and the terrors of the just resentment which he must be sure to meet from a brave and insulted people, and which must finally crush him, will be for ever before his eyes.

In vain will such a minister, or the foul dregs of his power, the tools of corruption and despotism, preach up in the *speech* that *spirit of concord*, and that obedience to the laws, which is essential to good order. They have sent the *spirit of discord* through the land, and I will prophecy, that it will never be extinguished, but by the extinction of their power. Is the *spirit of concord* to go hand in hand with the *PEACE* and *EXCISE*, through this nation? Is it to be expected between an insolent *EXCISEMAN*, and a *peer, gentleman, freeholder, or farmer*, whose private houses are now made liable to be entered and searched at pleasure? Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, and in general all the *cyder* counties, are not surely the *several counties*, which are alluded to in the *speech*. The *spirit of concord* has not gone forth among them; but the *spirit of liberty* has, and a noble opposition has been given to the wicked instruments of oppression. A nation as sensible as the *English*, will see that a *spirit of concord*, when they are oppressed, means a tame submission to injury, and that a *spirit of liberty* ought then to arise, and I am sure ever will, in proportion to the weight of the grievance they feel. *Every legal attempt of a contrary tendency to the spirit of concord* will be deemed a justifiable resistance, warranted by the *spirit of the English constitution*.

A despotical minister will always endeavour to dazzle his prince with high-flown ideas of the *prerogative* and *honour* of the *crown*, which the minister will make a parade of *firmly maintaining*. I wish as much as any man in the kingdom to see the *honour of the crown* maintained in a manner truly becoming *Royalty*. I lament to see it sunk even to prostitution. What a shame was it to see the security of this country in point of military force, complimented away, contrary to the opinion of *Royalty* itself, and sacrificed to the prejudices and to the ignorance of a set of people, the most unfit, from every consideration, to be consulted on a matter relative to the security of the *house of Hanover*? . . . Is it meant to assert the *honour of the crown* only against the united wishes of a loyal and affectionate people, founded in a happy experience of the talents,

ability, integrity and virtue of those, who have had the glory of redeeming the country from bondage and ruin, in order to support, by every art of corruption and intimidation, a weak, disjointed, incapable set of — I will call them anything but *ministers*—by whom the *Favourite* still meditates to rule this kingdom with a rod of iron ?

The *Stuart* line has ever been intoxicated with the slavish doctrines of the *absolute, independent, unlimited* power of the crown. Some of that line were so weakly advised, as to endeavour to reduce them into practice ; but the English nation was too spirited to suffer the least encroachment on the ancient liberties of this kingdom. The *king of England* is only the first magistrate of this country ; but is invested by law with the whole executive power. He is, however, responsible to his people for the due execution of the royal functions, in the choice of ministers, &c., equally with the meanest of his subjects in his particular duty. The personal character of our present amiable sovereign makes us easy and happy that so great a power is lodged in such hands ; but the *favourite* has given too just cause for him to escape the general odium. The *prerogative* of the crown is to exert the constitutional powers entrusted to it in a way, not of blind favour and partiality, but of wisdom and judgment. This is the spirit of our constitution. The people too have their *prerogative*, and I hope the fine words of DRYDEN will be engraven on our hearts,

Freedom is the *English subject's* Prerogative.

Straightforward and outspoken as were the criticisms and complaints thus offered by Wilkes in No. 45 of the 'North Briton,' he had used language almost as bold before. In the then state of the law and of opinion about royal prerogative, ministerial responsibility, and parliamentary privilege, however, there were technical grounds for seeing in his stinging condemnation of the ministers as betrayers of the nation, and of the king as their dupe, a punishable offence, and an opportunity of making the writer suffer for his former misdeeds as well as for this new attack upon them. The king and his advisers had some reason to be angry, and might have safely retaliated. As it happened, they recklessly broke the law in their anxiety to wreak vengeance on a supposed law-breaker. Hence complete victory came to Wilkes in the end ; but it was long delayed and hardly won.

The article having been published on Saturday, April 23, the Earl of Halifax, the senior secretary of state, applied on Monday to the law officers of the crown for advice as to the course to be pursued against those who had written, published, and circulated it. On Wednesday the law officers replied that the article was 'a most infamous and seditious libel, tending to inflame the minds and alienate the affections of the people from his majesty, and to excite them to traitorous insurrections against his government, and therefore punishable as a misdemeanour of the highest nature in due course of law by indictment or information, which latter method of prosecution is the most usual and proper, in obedience to the commands of his majesty, when signified by a secretary of state.' On Tuesday, however, without waiting for that report, Halifax had issued a general warrant 'to search for the authors and printers of a treasonable and seditious paper, entitled "The North Briton," No. 45, and them having found to apprehend and seize, together with their papers, and bring them before him to be examined.' On the strength of that, George Kearsley, the publisher, and Balfe, the printer, were at once arrested, and certain documents in the handwritings of Wilkes and Churchill were seized; but these latter were not interfered with until Saturday the 30th, when Wilkes was taken into custody, and by a characteristic device enabled Churchill to escape. While Wilkes was in altercation with the king's messengers, to whom he pointed out that as a member of parliament he was privileged from arrest, Churchill, who was not identified by the officers, entered the room. 'Good-morrow, Mr. Thompson,' said Wilkes, who himself gleefully told the story. 'How does Mrs. Thompson do to-day? Does she dine in the country?' The hint was promptly taken. 'Mr.

Churchill,' according to Wilkes, 'thanked me, said she then waited for him, that he had only come for a moment to ask me how I did, and almost directly took his leave. He went home immediately, secured all his papers, and retired into the country. The messengers could never get intelligence where he was.' Having thus saved his friend, Wilkes allowed the officers to take him from his house in Great George Street, where this scene occurred, to Whitehall. There he was examined by Lord Halifax and by Lord Egremont, the other secretary of state, and after that he was sent to the Tower, his house being presently searched, and all papers likely to incriminate him being unlawfully taken possession of. His friends at once applied for a writ of *habeas corpus*, but he was in prison for a week before the matter could be brought up in the Court of Common Pleas, where the judge at once ordered his discharge, without prejudice to the action against him, but on the ground that, as a member of parliament, he ought not to have been arrested.¹

That fortnight's series of blunders and illegalities formed the prelude to a ten years' struggle, of which, when it was really only half over, in 1769, Burke said: 'Thus ended the fifth act of this tragi-comedy; a tragi-comedy acted by his majesty's servants, at the desire of several persons of quality, for the benefit of Mr. Wilkes, and at the expense of the constitution.' Burke's last clause was only correct in one sense. The tragi-comedy was expensive enough, in money as well as reputation, to those who produced it, but the constitution in the end gained instead of losing by the

¹ *A complete Collection of the genuine Papers and Letters in the Case of John Wilkes* (Paris, 1767). These incidents and those which followed are set forth in detail in Mr. Rae's *Wilkes, Sheridan, Fox*, the seventh chapter of *May's Constitutional History*, and other works.

business. The system of general warrants, an illegal survival from Star Chamber days, was finally discredited, to the great advantage of all classes of the community, with the exception of arbitrary usurpers of power in defiance of the law; and many other important benefits ensued. The liberty of the press, especially in the full sense of the term, was far more firmly established than it had ever been before, and newspaper enterprise was largely developed through the advance towards complete independence in newspaper writing which was now effected. The story is full of interest, and of great importance in many ways. Only the chief items in it, however, need be briefly mentioned here.

Released from the Tower, Wilkes at once, with substantial help from Lord Temple and other friends, instituted proceedings against the government for his unlawful imprisonment and for the fraudulent seizure of his papers. On this suit, after many delays, 5,000*l.* damages were awarded him, and as Kearsley and Balfe, his publisher and printer, Entinck and others connected with 'The Monitor,' and several more, who, with even less excuse, had been dealt with under Lord Halifax's general warrant of April 26, followed his example, it was admitted by Lord North that the total of the costs and damages which the government had to pay for its lawless folly amounted to 100,000*l.*

Concurrently with this action for damages, Wilkes carried on his war with the government in other ways; and his vanity, flattered by his increased popularity among the citizens of London, who had made a hero of him long before, led him, against the advice of Lord Temple and other friends, into rash courses that brought him unnecessary trouble. While awaiting his trial for libel, which was tardily proceeded with in legal

form after the failure of the attempt to imprison him illegally, and which would probably have been dropped had no fresh provocation been offered, he indiscreetly set up in his own house a printing press from which, as no tradesman would take the risk of working under him, he reissued the back numbers of 'The North Briton,' with notes, and proposed to continue the series, one number of which actually appeared on November 12. Yet more indiscreetly, he issued from this private press handbills and other matter for his own and his friends' amusement ; one foolish undertaking, for which he can hardly be excused, being the putting in type of an 'Essay on Woman,' an indecent parody of Pope's 'Essay on Man,' which had been written some years before by Thomas Potter, the coarse-minded and profligate son of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Of this silly and offensive production only thirteen copies were printed, and none were published ; but one was stolen, and, as we shall see, made malicious use of by Wilkes's sometime associate and present enemy, Lord Sandwich, who had succeeded Lord Egremont as secretary of state.

When parliament met, after a long recess, on November 15, Wilkes was in his place, eager to call attention to the breach of privilege that had been committed by his arrest and imprisonment. He was forestalled by a motion which Lord North was put up by Grenville to propose, 'That the paper entitled "The North Briton, No. 45," is a false, scandalous, and seditious libel, containing expressions of the most unexampled insolence and contumely towards his majesty, the grossest aspersions upon both houses of parliament, and the most audacious defiance of the authority of the whole legislature, and most manifestly tending to alienate the affections of the people from his majesty,

to withdraw them from their obedience to the laws of the realm, and to incite them to traitorous insurrections against his majesty's government.' A hot debate ensued, during which, as Horace Walpole tells us, 'Mr. Wilkes, with all the impartiality in the world, and with the phlegm of an Areopagite, sat and heard the whole matter discussed, and now and then put in a word, as if the whole affair did not concern him.'¹ The house accepted the motion by a large majority, despite the arguments of Pitt and others; it also ordered that No. 45 should be burned by the common hangman; and shortly afterwards, stultifying all its previous assertions of exclusive parliamentary control in such matters, and making a valuable concession to the liberty of the press, the object being to open the way for more vengeance than it could itself wreak, it resolved 'that privilege of parliament does not extend to the case of writing and publishing seditious libels, nor ought to be allowed to obstruct the ordinary course of law in the speedy and effectual prosecution of so heinous and dangerous an offence.'² The hangman's task was interfered with by a mob which met him on the appointed day, December 3, outside the Royal Exchange, tore the copy of No. 45 out of his hands, bore it in triumph to Temple Bar, and there, in lieu of it, threw a jack-boot and a petticoat, as emblems of Lord Bute and the king's mother, into a bonfire.³ Of the graver resolutions of the House of Commons, one was acted upon by the Court of King's Bench in February 1764. The other it enforced itself on January 19, by a vote depriving Wilkes of his seat as member for Aylesbury.

¹ *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. iv. p. 131.

² *Parliamentary History*, vol. xv. pp. 1362-1378; *Commons' Journals*, vol. xxix. p. 689.

³ *Horace Walpole's Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 330.

The government had intended that Wilkes's expulsion should immediately follow the resolution condemning him in November. But in the course of the debate on that resolution, Samuel Martin, a ministerial underling, had used such language about Wilkes that it led to a duel, in which Wilkes was so seriously wounded that his life was for some time in danger. He went to Paris, where his daughter was living, and sent thence a medical certificate to excuse his non-compliance with an order of the house for his attendance. After waiting two months for his recovery, however, the house refused to wait longer, and he was expelled in his absence.

He was also absent, for the same reason, on February 21, when the action against him which had been commenced in the Court of King's Bench came on for hearing. In this action he was charged, not with the original publication of No. 45, but with the offence of reprinting it, and also with the printing and publishing of the 'Essay on Woman,' which that notorious profligate Lord Sandwich had taken upon himself to read in the House of Peers,¹ and for which he had been condemned by vote of the house, coupled with a resolution that he should be prosecuted for the 'obscene libel.' Though he was unable to appear and defend himself in court, a form of trial was gone through, he was found guilty, and soon afterwards, on an allegation of contumacy, he was outlawed.

There is clear evidence that all these outrages were perpetrated at the direct instigation of King George III.,

¹ 'The Beggar's Opera being performed at Covent Garden Theatre soon after this event,' says Horace Walpole, 'the whole audience, when Macheath says, "That Jemmy Twitcher should peach me, I own surprises me," burst out into an applause of appreciation, and the nickname of Jemmy Twitcher stuck by the earl so as almost to occasion the disuse of his title.'—*Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 314.

and of Lord Bute and other courtiers whom Wilkes had offended. ‘Hath not his spirit dared oppose,’ Churchill had mockingly asked on their behalf,

Our dearest measures ? made our name
Stand forward on the roll of shame ?
Hath he not won the vulgar tribes
By scorning menaces and bribes ?
And proving that his darling cause
Is of their liberties and laws
To stand the champion ?¹

‘Wilkes will be demolished whether he comes home or stays abroad,’ one of the courtiers, Lord Barrington, had written.² Wilkes was not demolished, but he stayed abroad until the time arrived for him to turn the tables on his enemies, and—as far as he could—to set himself right with the world.

The contemptible Grenville administration gave place to the Rockingham administration, and that in its turn to the Grafton administration—of which Pitt, now Earl of Chatham, was the real head, in so far as the king, whose power was being increased by each of these changes, allowed—during the four years of Wilkes’s absence. Notwithstanding his outlawry, he returned to London in March 1768, and moved about freely ; but though Lord Chatham was friendly, he could not get the sentences against him reversed. ‘The ministers are embarrassed to the last degree how to act with regard to Wilkes,’ wrote the Bishop of Carlisle. ‘It seems they are afraid to press the king for his pardon, as that is a subject his majesty will not easily hear the least mention of ; and they are appre-

¹ *The Duellist*, written on the occasion of Wilkes’s duel with Martin. In another poem, *The Conference*, Churchill had said,

What if ten thousand Butes and Hollands bawl ?
One Wilkes hath made a large amends for all.

² *Chatham Correspondence*, vol. ii. p. 271.

hensive, if he has it not, that the mob of London will rise in his favour, which God forbid!' ¹ The mob did not rise, but it favoured his candidature for a seat in the new parliament that was elected in this month. He contested the city of London, but was defeated by a small majority; and next week he contested the county of Middlesex, when he won by a large majority. Those who had shouted 'Wilkes and No. 45!' in 1763, now shouted 'Wilkes and Liberty!' 'It is a barren season,' Horace Walpole wrote, 'for all but cabalists who can compound, divide, multiply No. 45 forty-five thousand different ways. I saw in the papers to-day that somehow or other this famous number and the number of the beast in the Revelations is the same—an observation from which different persons will draw different conclusions.' ²

Before parliament opened, Wilkes applied to the Court of King's Bench to have his outlawry reversed. This was done in May, after he had been for a short time in custody, from which the mob once rescued him, and during which, he having voluntarily surrendered himself, there was much rioting and collision between the military and the populace; but on the old charge of publishing No. 45, and 'An Essay on Woman,' he was sentenced to twenty-two months confinement in gaol, and fined 1,000*l*. While he was in prison his friend and disciple, William Bingley, resumed 'The North Briton,' of which No. 47 appeared on May 10, and which was continued in a clumsy and rowdy way, with interruptions, for a few years. ³ Bingley, however, had to do much of his editing from the King's Bench

¹ *Grenville Papers*, vol. iii. p. 241.

² *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. v. p. 111.

³ Another *North Briton* continuation had been attempted in 1764, but this was a plagiarism of the title, and Wilkes had nothing to do with it.

prison, to which he was committed in November ; and several other Wilkites, as they came to be called, were imprisoned in these troubled times.¹

Wilkes himself, in December, while he was in gaol, published in 'The St. James's Chronicle' a letter of Lord Weymouth's--giving orders for the military attack that had been made on the mob that sided with him at the time of his committal to prison--which, he said, 'shows how long a hellish project can be brooded over by some infernal spirits without one moment's remorse.' For this great piece of journalistic boldness, Wilkes, whose election as member for Middlesex had not before been taken notice of, as he had not been able to come out of gaol and claim his seat, was brought to the bar of the House of Commons. and, on February 3, 1769, a second time expelled, all the more angrily because, when called upon to defend himself, he had exclaimed, 'Whenever a secretary of state shall dare to write so bloody a scroll, I will through life dare to write such prefatory remarks, as well as to make my appeal to the nation on the occasion.' The younger Pitt, Burke, Lord Mayor Beckford, even his old persecutor George Grenville, and others argued that the libel on Lord Weymouth, however punishable by a court of law, was not a matter for parliament to deal with ; but the government obtained a majority of 219 against 137.²

A fresh election to fill up the vacant Middlesex seat was ordered, and on February 16 Wilkes was re-elected without opposition. Next day the House of Commons declared the election void, and a new writ was issued.

¹ It was to such imprisonments as these that Margin referred in the passage from Foote's *Bankrupt* quoted in the last chapter as 'the very life and soul of our trade.'

² *Parliamentary History*, vol. xvi. p. 546.

Wilkes was again returned, to be again expelled in March, and the farce, or, as Burke called it, the tragedy-comedy, was once more played through.

Wilkes, being still a prisoner, now for a short time left his friends to carry on the agitation. In the city of London, of which he had been elected an alderman, subscriptions were raised for him, and meetings, growing stormier and stormier, were held to advocate his claims. Even the House of Peers, on Lord Chatham's motion, took his case into consideration. 'With one party,' Chatham said of Wilkes. 'he is a patriot of the first magnitude, with the other the vilest incendiary. For my own part I consider him merely and indifferently as an English subject, possessed of certain rights which the law has given him, and which the laws alone can take from him.' Lord Chancellor Camden declared that 'for some time he had beheld with silent indignation the arbitrary measures the ministry were pursuing,' and that, 'as to the incapacitating vote, he considered it as a direct attack upon the first principles of the constitution.'¹ The House of Peers rejected Lord Chatham's motion, and also one to like effect proposed by Lord Rockingham in February 1770; and the House of Commons was as obdurate when appealed to by Sir George Savile, Dowdeswell, and others.

The London citizens then came yet more to the front. They had petitioned the king in 1769 without receiving an answer. They now petitioned again, and, asserting their right to personal audience with the sovereign, sent Lord Mayor Beckford, the sheriffs, and two hundred aldermen and liverymen, to declare 'that the majority of the House of Commons have deprived your people of their dearest rights—they have done a deed more

¹ *Parliamentary History*, vol. xvi. pp. 653-666; *Gentleman's Magazine*, January 1770.

ruinous in its consequences than the levying of ship-money by Charles I. or the dispensing power assumed by James II.,' and to request his majesty 'to restore the constitutional government and quiet of his people by dissolving the parliament and removing his evil ministers for ever from his councils.' King George answered that such a request was one 'which he could not but consider as disrespectful to himself, injurious to parliament, and irreconcilable to the principles of the constitution,' and then, it is reported, 'turned round to his courtiers, and burst out laughing.'¹ That was on March 14. On May 23 the lord mayor was sent up with a bolder petition, and, when the king again scoffed at it, replied with the yet bolder words which are inscribed in letters of gold on the monument that the grateful citizens erected in honour of him who had spoken them. Beckford died a week afterwards, partly in consequence of the excitement thus forced upon him in his old age; but Wilkes lived to achieve a series of victories, and to obtain as much redress for the wrongs done to him as was possible.

The term of his imprisonment being completed in April 1770, he was able to take a personal share in the city's further petitioning of the king. In 1771 he was elected sheriff of London and Middlesex, and in 1774 he was made lord mayor, out of his turn, and as a marked protest against the tyranny of court and parliament. In the same year, the House of Commons from which he had been four times expelled having been dissolved, he was once more returned to the new one as member for Middlesex, and his enemies did not venture again to keep him out of his seat. Thereupon he lost no time in calling for a reversal of the policy adopted towards him. In February 1775 he moved that the resolution

¹ *Rockingham Memoirs*, vol. xi. p. 174.

declaring his incapacity should be expunged from the journals of the house, 'as subversive of the rights of the whole body of electors.' This being refused, he repeated his motion in 1776, in 1777, in 1779, in 1781, and finally in 1782, when it was agreed to. He lived on till 1797, but his later history, in some respects discreditable to him, does not here concern us. About one very important service done by him to journalism in 1771, when, in his office of alderman and magistrate, he helped materially to establish the claim of newspapers to report the proceedings of parliament, something will be said hereafter. Save in this respect, his own share in newspaper history had all but ceased with the publication of 'The North Briton' and the settlement of the quarrels growing out of the famous No. 45.

Before these quarrels were settled a far abler writer than Wilkes had appeared to continue and extend the journalistic work in which accident, rather than his own talents or wisdom, had made him so conspicuous. What sort of a man Junius was no one can tell, for he wrapped himself in a veil of anonymity which has never been removed, and, as he said, 'If I am a vain man, my gratification lies within a narrow circle; I am the sole depository of my own secret, and it shall perish with me.'¹ But as a critic and a satirist he was in every way superior to Wilkes.

If Junius was Sir Philip Francis, he was in his twenty-sixth year when he wrote his first known letter

¹ *Letters of Junius*; dedication. About the controversy that has gone on during more than a century as to the identity of Junius it is unnecessary for me to say anything; and his letters are so well known and so easily accessible that I need do no more than briefly indicate above their place in political journalism, and note in the next chapter their importance as contributions to newspaper progress. Perhaps the opinion now generally held, on the authority of Macaulay and others, that Junius was Sir Philip Francis, is correct.

to 'The Public Advertiser,' which, as we shall presently see, was the most influential of the daily papers published at this time, and which was to acquire much fresh influence through his contributions. That letter, dated April 28, 1767, was signed Poplicola, one of the many pseudonyms that this writer adopted—others being Anti-Sejanus junior, Mnemon, Bifrons, Atticus, Lucius, and Brutus—before he decided that he would be known to his contemporaries and posterity as Junius. It was a bitter attack on Lord Chatham, who had lately taken office again as prime minister and with Lord Bute as his ally, or, as Poplicola averred, had brought 'all the artifices, the intrigues, the hypocrisy, and the impudence of his past life' to a climax, in that, after he had 'spent years in declaiming against the pernicious influence of a favourite,' he had 'taken that favourite to his bosom, and made him the only partner of his power.'¹ Of Bute he said two months later: 'To create or foment confusion, to sacrifice the honour of a king, or to destroy the happiness of a nation, requires no talent, but a natural itch for doing mischief. We have seen it performed for years successively, with a wantonness of triumph, by a man who had neither abilities nor personal interest, nor even common personal courage. It has been possible for a notorious coward, skulking under a petticoat, to make a great nation the prey of his avarice and ambition. But I trust the time is not very distant when we shall see him dragged forth from his retirement, and forced to answer severely for all the mischiefs he hath brought upon us.'²

From these sentences it will be seen that Junius was, from the first, a master of invective. He was not

¹ *Miscellaneous Letters of Junius*, No. 1.

² *Ibid.*, No. 3.

a consistent critic or a persistent hater. He denounced or tolerated, praised or vilified, if not as the humour took him, at any rate as what we may assume to be personal interests prompted him; and his use of various pseudonyms enabled him to vary his opinions without openly stultifying himself. Though in most particulars he showed intimate and accurate knowledge of facts, thereby adding greatly to the force of his attacks, moreover, he sometimes wrote ignorantly and on hearsay evidence. In his first reference to Wilkes, for instance, in April 1768, he spoke of him as 'a man of most infamous character in private life, indicted for a libel against the king's person, solemnly tried by his peers according to the laws of the land, and found guilty,' who, 'without a single qualification, either moral or political,' had been suffered by indolent and incapable ministers, 'perhaps in consequence of a secret compact with him,' 'to throw the metropolis into a flame, to offer new outrages to his sovereign, and at last to force his way into parliament';¹ and in March 1769 he spoke of him as 'the favourite of his country, whose pardon would have been accepted with gratitude, whose pardon would have healed all our divisions.'²

When Junius wrote as Junius, however, he was generally careful to express views that did not contradict one another, whether he was discussing the character and conduct of Wilkes or any other subject. In the letters that, under his favourite designation, he addressed either to 'The Public Advertiser' or to Wilkes in private, he made no attempt to conceal the personal dislike, and even contempt, with which he regarded the member for Middlesex, while he very clearly laid down sound constitutional maxims; and

¹ *Miscellaneous Letters of Junius*, No. 17.

² *Letters of Junius*, No. 8.

his statement of these was made all the more impressive by its superciliousness. Denouncing the Duke of Grafton, he said, 'You have degraded the royal dignity into a base, dishonourable competition with Mr. Wilkes; nor had you abilities to carry even this last contemptible triumph over a private man without the grossest violation of the fundamental laws of the constitution and rights of the people.'¹ And he addressed the king himself in language yet more emphatic. 'Mr. Wilkes,' he said, 'brought with him into politics the same liberal sentiments by which his private conduct had been directed, and seemed to think that, as there are few excesses in which an English gentleman may not be permitted to indulge, the same latitude was allowed him in the choice of his political principles and in the spirit of maintaining them. In the earnestness of his zeal he suffered some unwarrantable insinuations to escape him. He said more than moderate men would justify, but not enough to entitle him to the honour of your majesty's personal resentment. The rays of royal indignation collected upon him served only to illuminate, and could not consume. Animated by the favour of the people on one side, and heated by persecution on the other, his views and sentiments changed with his situation. Hardly serious at first, he is now an enthusiast.' 'Is this,' he asked scornfully, 'a contention worthy of a king? Are you not sensible how much the meanness of the cause gives an air of ridicule to the serious difficulties into which you have been betrayed? The destruction of one man has been now, for many years, the sole object of your government; and, if there can be anything still more disgraceful, we have seen, for such an object, the utmost influence of the executive power, and every ministerial artifice,

¹ *Letters of Junius*, No. 15.

exerted without success. Nor can you ever succeed unless *he* should be imprudent enough to forfeit the protection of those laws to which you owe your crown, or unless your ministers should persuade you to make it a question of force alone, and try the whole strength of government in opposition to the people.’¹

Writing with various signatures in ‘The Public Advertiser’ through more than five years down to May 1772, Junius wrote his best letters, as Junius, between January 21, 1769, and January 21, 1772, and of these there were thirty-eight. The first was penned when the Duke of Grafton, replacing Lord Chatham, and himself soon to be replaced by Lord North, had for a year been nominal head of the ministry with which, often shifting the pawns and other pieces on his chess-board, George III. kept the political game in his own hands till 1782 or later. Junius was a Whig of Walpole’s school at its best, with only such changes in its policy as he deemed prudent or convenient to the partisanship he affected, and with no more sympathy for the democrats like Wilkes, whose energies he sought to make useful to the state, as he understood it, than for the Tories and the ‘king’s friends,’ on whom he heaped unstinted scorn. In his first letter he reviewed the whole situation. ‘Behold,’ he said, ‘a nation overwhelmed with debt; her revenues wasted; her trade declining; the affections of her colonies alienated; the duty of the magistrate transferred to the soldiery; a gallant army, which never fought unwillingly but against their fellow-subjects, mouldering away for want of the direction of a man of common abilities and spirit; and, in the last instance, the administration of justice become odious and suspected to the whole body of the people. This deplorable scene admits of but one addition—that we

¹ *Letters of Junius*, No. 35.

are governed by counsels from which a reasonable man can expect no remedy but poison, no relief but death.' ¹

Sir William Draper ventured, in 'The Public Advertiser' of January 26, to take up the cudgels for Grafton and his colleagues against 'this Junius, this high-priest of envy, malice, and all uncharitableness,' and Junius made Draper a special object of attack in his next and several subsequent letters, until the poor, baffled knight was forced to seek in America a hiding-place from his assailant's blows. In the meanwhile Junius attacked others as well, and with steadily increasing boldness and bitterness; saying much besides what has been quoted in defence, not of Wilkes, but of the principles that were outraged in the treatment to which Wilkes was subjected. Condemning Grafton on public grounds, he held up to ridicule his private character and conduct. 'There is something in both,' he said, 'which distinguishes you not only from all other ministers, but all other men. It is not that you do wrong by design, but that you should never do right by mistake. It is not that your indolence and your activity have been equally misapplied, but that the first uniform principle, or, if I may so call it, the genius of your life, should have carried you through every possible change and contradiction of conduct without the momentary imputation or colour of a virtue, and that the wildest spirit of contradiction should never once have betrayed you into a wise or honourable action.' The Duke of Grafton was Charles II.'s great-grandson, and Junius brought this ugly fact into the controversy. 'The character of the reputed ancestors of some men has made it possible for their descendants to be vicious in the extreme without being degenerate. Those of your grace, for instance, left no distressing examples of virtue,

¹ *Letters of Junius*, No. 1.

even to their legitimate posterity, and you may look back with pleasure to an illustrious pedigree in which heraldry has not left a single good quality upon record to insult or upbraid you. You have better proofs of your descent, my lord, than the register of a marriage, or any troublesome inheritance of reputation. There are some hereditary strokes of character by which a family may be as clearly distinguished as by the blackest features of the human race. Charles I. lived and died a hypocrite. Charles II. was a hypocrite of another sort, and should have died upon the same scaffold. At the distance of a century we see their different characters happily revived and blended in your grace. Sullen and severe without religion, profligate without gaiety, you live like Charles II., without being an amiable companion, and for aught I know may die as his father did, without the reputation of a martyr.’¹

The Duke of Grafton died comfortably forty-two years later, but Junius, along with Lord Chatham and others, worried him out of the premiership in January 1770, though he soon returned to take subordinate office, and to be further attacked over and over again by Junius, whose counsel in February he had not cared to follow. ‘Retire, my lord,’ Junius wrote then, ‘and hide your blushes from the world, for with such a load of shame even black may change its colour. A mind such as yours, in the solitary hours of domestic enjoyment, may still find topics of consolation. You may find it in the memory of violated friendship, in the afflictions of an accomplished prince whom you have disgraced and deserted, and in the agitations of a great country driven by your counsels to the brink of destruction.’ ‘Your grace,’ he added, ‘was the firm minister of yesterday. Lord North is the firm minister of to-day.

¹ *Letters of Junius*, No. 12.

To-morrow, perhaps his majesty, in his wisdom, may give us a rival for you both.’¹

The most daring, though not the most violent, of all the letters of Junius was the one he addressed to the king on December 19, 1769, and of which he said a week before, ‘I am now meditating a capital and, I hope, a final piece.’²

‘It is the misfortune of your life,’ this long letter began, ‘and originally the cause of every reproach and distress which has attended your government, that you should never have been acquainted with the language of truth until you heard it in the complaints of your people. It is not, however, too late to correct the error of your education.’ Junius thereupon proceeded to instruct his majesty on several points, sarcastically proposing to ‘separate the amiable, good-natured prince from the folly and treachery of his servants, and the private virtues of the man from the vices of his government.’ This was a comprehensive indictment of the policy of past and present ministers whom George III. was blamed for appointing, with particular reference to the Wilkes case ; and plain warning was joined with plain reproof. ‘If the English people should no longer confine their resentment to a submissive representation of their wrongs,’ Junius urged, ‘if, following the glorious example of their ancestors, they should no longer appeal to the creature of the constitution, but to that high Being who gave them the rights of humanity, whose gifts it were sacrilege to surrender, let me ask you, sir, upon what part of your subjects would you rely for assistance ? The people of Ireland have been uniformly plundered and oppressed. In return they give you every day fresh marks of their resentment. . . . The

¹ *Letters of Junius*, No. 36.

² *Private Letters of Junius*, No. 15.

distance of the colonies would make it impossible for them to take an active concern in your affairs, if they were as well affected to your government as they once pretended to be to your person. . . . It is not from the alienated affections of Ireland or America that you can reasonably look for assistance; still less from the people of England, who are actually contending for their rights and, in this great question, are parties against you.' 'The people of England,' he said, in conclusion, 'are loyal to the House of Hanover, not from a vain preference of one family to another, but from a conviction that the establishment of that family was necessary to the support of their civil and religious liberties. This, sir, is a principle of allegiance equally solid and rational, fit for Englishmen to adopt, and well worthy of your majesty's encouragement. We cannot long be deluded by nominal distinctions. The name of Stuart, of itself, is only contemptible; armed with the sovereign authority, their principles are formidable. The prince who imitates their conduct should be warned by their example, and, while he plumes himself upon the security of his title to the crown, should remember that, as it was acquired by one revolution, it may be lost by another.'¹

Junius continued his trenchant letters to 'The Public Advertiser' for more than two years longer, ending with two indignant articles, which appeared in the same number, on Lord Mansfield, whom he declared to be 'the very worst and most dangerous man in the kingdom';² and he wrote on, as Veteran, Anti-Belial, Scotus, Arthur Tell-Truth, and Nemesis, for four months further. But he laid aside his pen in May 1772, and, when asked in the following January for fresh contributions, he replied, 'In the

¹ *Letters of Junius*, No. 35.

² *Ibid.*, Nos. 68 and 69.

present state of things, if I were to write again, I must be as silly as any of the horned cattle that run mad through the city, or any of your wise aldermen. I meant the cause and the public. Both are given up. I feel for the honour of this country when I see there are not two men in it who will unite and stand together upon any one question. But it is all alike—vile and contemptible.’¹

Whether Junius was Sir Philip Francis or some one else, it may be assumed that there were other than public reasons for the discontinuance of his newspaper warfare after it had been waged for five years, but while it lasted it raised journalism to a far more important position than it had ever held before, and its influence did not end with its close. Great strides were made between 1755, when ‘The Monitor’ was started, and—‘The North Briton’ intervening—1772, when Junius vanished.

¹ *Private Letters of Junius*, No. 63.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WOODFALLS AND OTHERS.

1760—1788.

GEORGE III. had no liking for newspapers ; but they made great progress during the sixty years of his reign, and partly in consequence of his and his advisers' efforts to restrain them. The fight for liberty, though it was not finished in his day or in the lifetime of either of his sons, was carried on from year to year ; and if no other writer as vigorous as Junius appeared in his generation or in the one that followed it, the same causes that brought Junius into the field led to the continuance and extension of the journalistic work in one line of which he excelled. There was a steady increase both of newspaper enterprise and of the power of newspapers in influencing and informing public opinion ; and not a little of the credit is due to the intelligence and zeal of Henry Sampson Woodfall and William Woodfall, two worthy members of a family of printers which was famous all through the eighteenth century.

Henry Woodfall, the first of this family of whom we have any record, was a printer who in Queen Anne's time, and down to the year 1747 or later, 'carried on a considerable business with reputation' just outside Temple Bar, Pope being one of the many men of letters for whom he worked. He had two sons, Henry

and George, who started in trade for themselves during their father's lifetime ; the elder as a printer in Pater-noster Row, the younger as a bookseller at Charing Cross.¹ The second Henry Woodfall, who was master of the Stationers' Company in 1766, and died 'wealthy and respected' in 1769, either obtained through his father or acquired for himself a tenth share of 'The Public Advertiser,' which, as has already been noted, was descended from 'The Daily Post,' started with Defoe's help in 1719, and successively called 'The London Daily Post and General Advertiser' and 'The General Advertiser' before 1752, when it began to flourish under its more famous name. Though only a partner in the concern, this Henry Woodfall had the management of the paper till 1758, when he entrusted both the printing and the editing of it to his eldest son, Henry Sampson Woodfall, who was then but nineteen years of age. By the younger Woodfall 'The Public Advertiser' was skilfully conducted till 1793, when he retired from business.² Through more than half of George III.'s reign he was thus one of the most conspicuous men in the newspaper world, but his brother William, six years younger, was in some respects quite as notable a man.

William Woodfall had been apprenticed to book-selling under Richard Baldwin, in Paternoster Row, but, being fond of theatrical society, he had tried his fortunes as an actor for a year or so before 1769, when, at the age of four-and-twenty, and on his father's death, he settled down in the family calling. Besides having some connection with 'The Weekly Packet,' he became printer and editor of a new Whig paper, 'The Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser,' which was

¹ Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. i. p. 300 ; *Notes and Queries*, vol. xi. pp. 377, 418 ; vol. xii. pp. 197, 217.

² Nichols, vol. i. p. 301.

then commenced in friendly rivalry to his brother's 'Public Advertiser,' and he managed it successfully during twenty years.

Of the daily papers published in London when George III. began to reign, the oldest, unless we regard 'The Public Advertiser' as identical with 'The Daily Post,' were 'The Daily Advertiser,' started in 1724, and 'The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser,' started in 1728 ; but both of these had come to be little more than advertising sheets, containing a few columns of news, but of no political importance. They were far surpassed by 'The Public Advertiser,' which offered, along with a good summary of foreign and domestic intelligence, original articles, and sometimes smart pieces of verse. Its chief attraction to many readers, however, was the ample supply of letters on all sorts of subjects, and from writers of all shades of opinion, which were printed in it. Of these the letters of Junius, whether bearing that famous signature or otherwise designated, were the most important between 1767 and 1772, but nearly every day's issue contained at least one that was worth reading. There was hardly a public man who did not use the columns of 'The Public Advertiser' in order to call attention to some grievance he wanted redressed or to some interest he desired to advance. The most frequent correspondents were Whigs or other opponents of the government ; but ministerialists, and sometimes even ministers of high rank, wrote to contradict the statements and arguments put forward by their adversaries, and Woodfall prided himself on the strict impartiality with which he opened his columns to all who gave or sold him matter worth printing and likely to interest or instruct the public. Notwithstanding the great and deserved popularity of Junius,' said one who knew this judicious and enter-

prising old editor, 'yet as many very able papers on the ministerial side of the question were admitted as on that of the opposition, and without any other preference than priority of receipt, or than the temporary nature of the subject, would demand. With regard to the line of conduct he had adopted respecting his paper in a pecuniary point of view, it was always most scrupulously honourable and correct, and though frequently offered money to suppress certain articles of intelligence not pleasant to the particular individual, yet never could he be prevailed upon to forego what he deemed it his duty to the public for any consideration of such kind, however much to his personal advantage.'¹

Woodfall's publication of letters from amateur journalists and others pleased the readers of 'The Public Advertiser' as well as the writers, and it was continued in profusion for a long time after the memorable example set by Junius. It was still the fashion when Crabbe laughed good-humouredly at it in 1785 :—

Now puffs exhausted, advertisements passed,
Their correspondents stand exposed at last.
These are a numerous tribe, to fame unknown,
Who for the public good forego their own ;
Who, volunteers in paper war, engage
With double portion of their party's rage ;
Such are the Bruti, Decii, who appear,
Wooing the printer for admission here,
Whose generous souls can condescend to pray
For leave to throw their precious time away.

And we can easily understand how, as Crabbe suggested, there were more applicants for such permission than could be found room for, even though these unpaid-for contributions lessened the expenses of the paper and provoked the wrath of the professional journalists

¹ Nichols, vol. i. p. 301.

who suffered in pocket as well as in fame by the rivalry.

O, cruel Woodfall ! when a patriot draws
His grey-goose quill in his dear country's cause,
To vex and maul a ministerial race,
Can thy stern soul refuse the champion place ?
Alas ! thou know'st not with what anxious heart
He longs his best-loved labours to impart ;
How he has sent them to thy brethren round,
And still the same unkind reception found.
At length, indignant, will he damn the state,
Turn to his trade, and leave us to our fate.¹

Even Woodfall had need to keep down his expenses and court popularity by printing as many letters of the Junius sort as he could procure. In January 1765, before Junius began to write for it, the average circulation of 'The Daily Advertiser' was less than 2,000, the whole month's sale being only 47,575 copies. In December 1768, while Junius was writing, though not under that title, the circulation was about 3,000, or 75,450 in the course of the month. There was no considerable change during 1769 till December 19, when the letter to the king appeared, and when, though 1,750 additional copies were printed, there was not one to be bought at any price a few hours after the publication. The later Junius letters do not appear to have increased the circulation much further, as in December 1771, when all but the last two had appeared, the total sale was only 83,950, or a daily average of about 3,200.²

Some other curious statistics have been preserved, which throw light on the working expenses of 'The Public Advertiser' at this time. During 1773, it would seem, the entire cost of collecting and translating foreign news, including the purchase of foreign news-

¹ Crabbe, *The Newspaper*.

² *The Athenæum*, July 1848 and July 1849 ; Nos. 1,082, 1,083, and 1,132.

papers, was 114*l.*; while the charge for 'home news and incidents' was 282*l.* 4*s.* 11½*d.*, besides 12*l.* for 'Lloyd's Coffee-house for post news,' 31*l.* 10*s.* for 'Mr. Green for post entries,' and 8*l.* 5*s.* for a 'Ports-mouth letter,' as well as 50*l.* for 'plantation, Irish, Scotch, and country papers,' 26*l.* 8*s.* 9½*d.* for London 'morning and evening papers,' and 15*l.* 15*s.* for 'a person to go daily to fetch in advertisements, get evening papers, &c.' Other entries are for 'setting up extra advertisements,' 31*l.* 10*s.*; 'clerk, and to collect debts,' 30*l.*; and 'bad debts,' 18*l.* 3*s.* 6*d.* These modest items in a complete year's working of a daily paper were augmented by a charge of 210*l.* 19*s.* 6*d.* for Drury Lane, Covent Garden, and other playhouse 'advertisements,' the theatres at that time being paid for the privilege of printing their playbills in advance, instead of as now paying heavily for the insertion of their announcements. The record evidently does not include the payments made to the editor or to contributors other than the mere compilers of news. Nor are we told what were the proceeds of sales; but the income from advertisements after payment of the tax then levied averaged 50*l.* a week, and in 1774 the total profits, after payment of all expenses, were 1,740*l.* That sum was divided among the several proprietors, among whom John Rivington and James Dodsley, besides Henry Sampson Woodfall, each had a tenth share, and Thomas Longman, Thomas Cadell, and William Strahan had a twentieth apiece.¹

The most important rival of 'The Public Advertiser' at the commencement of George III.'s reign was 'The Public Ledger, a Daily Register of Commerce and Intelligence,' started on January 12, 1760, by Newberry, the bookseller in St. Paul's Churchyard, and

¹ Knight Hunt, *Fourth Estate*, vol. ii. pp. 191, 192.

edited by Griffith Jones. 'Unwilling to raise expectations which we may perhaps find ourselves unable to satisfy,' its projectors announced in their first number, 'we have made no mention of criticism or literature, which yet we do not professedly exclude, nor shall we reject any political essays which are apparently calculated for the public good.' Before it came to be a bald record of commercial items, however, 'The Public Ledger' was conducted with much spirit, and provided attractive reading for Tories and others. Goldsmith wrote for it as a 'Citizen of the World,' and received a guinea apiece for two articles each week.¹

Newberry's other paper, 'The Universal Chronicle,' now incorporated with 'The Westminster Gazette,' continued, after Johnson had ceased to contribute to it as 'the Idler,' to be for some time the favourite Tory weekly; and as a Saturday miscellany it offered formidable rivalry to the many others of the same class that were now in the field, most of them with a Whig bias, and including the veteran 'Read's Weekly Journal,' which had existed nearly half a century. Among the numerous tri-weekly papers, 'The St. James's Chronicle' started in 1760 as an independent Whig organ on the same lines as 'The Public Advertiser,' the more democratic 'London Evening Post' and the Tory 'London Chronicle' took precedence in their several ways; others being 'The General Evening Post' and 'Lloyd's Evening Post.' But the number of miscellaneous papers, some of them ephemeral and others long-lived, had by this time become so great, that it would be tedious to attempt such a chronicle of their appearances and disappearances as has been offered for the earlier and less crowded stages of newspaper history. Since the commencement of George III.'s reign every

¹ Forster, *Life of Goldsmith*.

year has had its own parcel of fresh journals started in London and the provincial towns, and only those of most importance need be mentioned.

One new paper, too interesting to be overlooked, was 'The Middlesex Journal, or Chronicle of Liberty,' of which the first number appeared on April 4, 1769, and which was issued every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, during a few years. It was commenced nine days before the third Middlesex election of that year, when, Wilkes having been twice returned without a contest to represent the county in parliament, and twice deprived of his seat by the vote of the House of Commons, the constituents once again insisted upon returning the man of their choice. 'The Middlesex Journal,' started by Lord Mayor Beckford and the citizens and others who supported Wilkes, and at first published by Isaac Fell, was an angry and outspoken opponent of the tyrannical policy adopted by the government. 'Roused by an honest indignation against those venal abettors of despotism, and animated with the warmest attachment to the genuine cause of liberty, enemies to every species of licentiousness, and at the same time professing the most steady adherence to our sovereign,' it was said in the opening article, 'we undertake to vindicate the cause of depressed liberty by exhibiting in full view to the people every measure that has already been taken, and every attempt that may farther be made upon that great charter of our laws, that palladium of English liberty, which, purchased by the best blood, has been maintained by the warmest zeal of the wisest and best men this nation has ever produced.' Wilkes's address to the electors of Middlesex, dated from King's Bench prison on March 23, was printed in this number, and other signed manifestoes by him, along with forcible articles and pungent letters by

various writers, appeared in succeeding numbers. Of general news, chiefly taken from the daily papers, about as much was here given as was furnished in the other tri-weekly journals ; but 'Wilkes and liberty' was its standing theme, enforced with considerable vigour and variety of illustration, according to the varying incidents in the prolonged struggle between the Wilkites and George III.'s ministers. 'The Middlesex Journal,' unlike 'The North Briton,' was a regular newspaper instead of being a weekly pamphlet, and if its leading articles lacked the literary skill of Junius's letters, and are to us somewhat tedious reading, they served well enough the purpose for which they were written. There was a 'poet's corner' as well as an abundance of prose argument and denunciation, and the following verses from the first number, suggested by the recent 'ennobling of a baronet,' are a fair sample of the quality of the whole :—

In former times (but heaven be praised
We've no such doings now !)
Some men to peerages were raised,
The world knew why and how.

The modern method is to sink
Contempt in one short word ;
For when a name begins to stink
We call the *thing* a Lord.

One of the contributors to 'The Middlesex Journal' was Thomas Chatterton, whose unhappy career in London illustrates in their saddest phase some of the difficulties of newspaper writers in the London of George III.'s and Johnson's time, though it would be as unfair to regard this poor boy's adventures as an average specimen of journalistic experience in those or any other days as it would be to judge him by the ordinary canons of ethics or to hold him responsible for the blunders into which his erratic and precocious genius led him.

Chatterton was not yet eighteen when he left Bristol to seek fame and fortune in London, but several of his poems had appeared in 'Felix Farley's Bristol Journal,' and, besides corresponding with Dodsley, the learned bookseller, who was kinder to him than Horace Walpole, he had sent up contributions to 'The Town and Country Magazine' and to 'The Middlesex Journal.' These latter, violent political letters in imitation of Junius's style, which, signed Decimus, had been printed in the numbers for February 24 and March 17, were very remarkable indeed as the productions of a youth of seventeen, but not otherwise of much interest. The success Chatterton had already achieved evidently led him to expect that in the metropolis he would quickly make his way, and during the first month he had ground for hoping. Reaching his kinswoman's house in Shoreditch on April 26, he next day, as he informed his mother, had encouraging interviews with four editors—Dodsley, who had charge of 'The Political Register,' and the publishers of 'The Town and Country Magazine,' of 'The Middlesex Journal,' and of 'The Freeholder's Magazine,' a monthly publication of the same political tone. All promised him work, and he soon obtained promises from seven or eight other editors, including Bingley, who, as Wilkes's successor, was still carrying on 'The North Briton.' 'Occasional essays for the daily papers,' he wrote in high spirits to his mother on May 6, 'would more than support me. What a glorious prospect! Mr. Wilkes knew me by my writings since I first corresponded with the booksellers. He affirmed that what Mr. Fell had of mine could not be the writings of a youth.'¹ Fell appears to have been at this time editing 'The Freeholder's Magazine,' the

¹ Chatterton, *Poetical Works* (edited by W. Skeat, with memoir by E. Bell), vol. i. pp. lxxxiv. 338.

editor of 'The Middlesex' now being either Hamilton or Edmunds ; but all these three were friends and fellow-workers, who exchanged articles with one another at their convenience, as also with the editors of 'The Town and Country' and 'The Political Register.'

In 'The Middlesex Journal' five articles signed Decimus and two signed Probus, all by Chatterton, were printed during May, the longest being one addressed to Lord Mayor Beckford, with reference to the appeals he was at this time making to King George III. on behalf of the citizens of London for the recognition of Wilkes's right to sit in parliament. It was dated May 18 and published on the 24th. 'You have doubtless heard of the lord mayor's remonstrating and addressing the king,' Chatterton wrote to his sister on the 30th, 'but it will be a piece of news to inform you that I have been with the lord mayor on the occasion. Having addressed an essay to his lordship, it was very well received—perhaps better than it deserved—and I waited on his lordship to have his approbation and to address a second letter to him on the subject of the remonstrance and its reception. His lordship received me as politely as a citizen could, and warmly invited me to call on him again.'¹

For four of his articles in 'The Middlesex' Chatterton received in May 2*l.*—half a guinea apiece for three, and eight and sixpence for one ; and he earned by other newspaper work 2*l.* 15*s.* 9*d.*, including half a guinea for 'The Consuliad,' a poem of two hundred lines, and another half-guinea for sixteen songs, to be printed in 'The Town and Country Magazine.'² Though this was poor pay, even for those days, the young man might have been satisfied with it had he continued to find a market for his writings. But the demand soon fell off, and some of the editors who accepted contributions from

¹ *Chatterton*, vol. i. p. 348.

² *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. lxxxviii.

him could not or would not pay, even when they used them. Chatterton was a hot democrat, anxious to go further than Wilkes ; and though his views were popular in London, they were not profitable. 'The devil of the matter is,' he said in the letter just quoted from, 'there is no money to be got on this side of the question. Interest is on the other side. But he is a poor author who cannot write on both sides.' There we see how quickly he learned the lesson which hard experience had taught so many other and older strugglers in the field of journalism. 'Essay writing,' he said soon afterwards, with the cynicism of a veteran, 'has this advantage, you are sure of constant pay, and when you have once wrote a piece which makes the author inquired after, you may bring the bookseller to your terms. Essays on the patriotic side fetch no more than what the copy is sold for.' And he added, 'They publish "The Gospel Magazine" here. For a whim I write in it. I believe there are not any in Bristol. They are hardly worth the carriage—methodistical and unmeaning.'¹ To his grief he speedily found that not even for such hack work as he was prepared to do was there 'constant pay' or a sufficient market.

Lord Mayor Beckford died suddenly on May 30, only a week after his famous interview with the king, and before Chatterton could publish the 'second letter' that he had planned and actually sent in to Bingley of 'The North Briton.' On hearing the news, according to the friend with whom he was lodging, Chatterton 'was perfectly frantic and out of his mind, and said he was ruined.'² He recovered heart enough to write an elegy on the patron from whom he had expected much, which was published in a shilling pamphlet, and at least two prose articles on the same subject ; but on the back

¹ *Chatterton*, vol. i. pp. 349, 350.

² *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. lxxxix.

of the returned 'second letter' he scribbled, with more petulance than good taste, 'Accepted by Bingley, set for, and driven out of "North Briton," 21 June, on account of the lord mayor's death. Lost by his death on this essay, 1*l.* 11*s.* 6*d.*, and gained in elegies 2*l.* 2*s.*; essays, 3*l.* 3*s.* = 5*l.* 5*s.* Am glad he is dead by 3*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.*'¹ But though he made this profit, and—having shifted his lodgings, where he had shared with his landlady's nephew a bed of which he made little use, as he sat up writing more than half the night, and having taken a garret in which he could work without interruption—made desperate efforts to secure a footing among the London journalists, the task was more than he could achieve. 'The printers of the daily publications,' he informed his sister at the end of June, 'are all frightened out of their patriotism, and will take nothing unless 'tis moderate or ministerial. I have not had five patriotic essays this fortnight; all must be ministerial or entertaining.'² 'Almost all the next "Town and Country Magazine" is mine,' he wrote in cheerful mood on July 20; but when the number was published he found that nearly everything he had sent in had been withheld, and so much as was printed does not seem to have been paid for. A memorandum found in his pocket-book after his death showed that 11*l.* was owing to him for articles accepted by various editors during his less than four months' residence in London.³ On August 25, a day before the four months were over, his over-taxed brain gave way, and, while yet three months were wanting to bring him to his eighteenth birthday, this most precocious, and in some other respects most remarkable of English journalists, put an end to his life.

Chatterton had come to London at an inauspicious

¹ *Chatterton*, vol. i. p. lxxxix.

² *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 356.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. xciii.

time. The letters of Junius, though the greater skill with which they were written rendered them more offensive and more injurious to the court and the ministry than anything that Wilkes had printed in 'The North Briton,' were so much more cautiously worded that it was by no means easy to find a pretext for punishing those who issued them, especially as the substantial victory won by Wilkes, in spite of his as yet unredressed wrongs, and the great popularity thus acquired by him, rendered further persecutions dangerous. The irritation and indignation caused and expressed in aristocratic circles, however, if they did not frighten Junius, alarmed others, and it was only reasonable that editors, who may have themselves agreed with Chatterton, should have shrunk from publishing such violent articles as he enjoyed writing. And, soon after his arrival, the democratic editors and publishers were forcibly reminded that the authorities were not prepared to submit meekly to all that was said against them.

The first to suffer was John Almon, a bookseller in Piccadilly, who published 'The London Museum,' one of the short-lived monthly magazines that were then plentiful. Almon, who also published 'The Political Register,' had already given personal offence to George III. by printing in it a proposal that the king had previously made for increasing the army in Ireland ; and, as a zealous collector of parliamentary news for 'The London Evening Post,' he was obnoxious to many others. He was accordingly singled out for prosecution on the charge of reprinting in 'The London Museum,' as others had done elsewhere, Junius's famous letter to the king. He was tried before Lord Mansfield on June 2, 1770, at the King's Bench, Westminster, found guilty, and fined ten marks, or 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* ¹

¹ Almon, *Biographical, Literary, and Political Anecdotes*.

The trial of Henry Sampson Woodfall, who was deemed more culpable, as the obnoxious letter had originally appeared in 'The Public Advertiser,' followed on June 13, but it was held at the King's Bench, Guildhall, where the jury was more independent, and it had a different result. Lord Mansfield, who presided here also, in the course of his vindictive summing-up, laid it down as law that, 'as for the intention, the malice, the sedition, or any harder words which might be given in informations for libels, public or private, they were merely formal words, mere words of course, mere inferences of law, with which the jury were not to concern themselves'—in plain terms, that they were not to decide whether the king had been libelled or not, but whether or not what the authorities regarded as a libel had been published in 'The Public Advertiser.'¹ As Junius himself mockingly explained, 'Conscious that the paper in question contained no treasonable or libellous matter, and that the severest parts of it, however painful to the king or offensive to his servants, were strictly true, Lord Chief Justice Mansfield would fain have restricted the jury to the finding of special facts, which, as to guilty or not guilty, were merely indifferent. This particular motive, combined with the general purpose to contract the power of juries, will account for the charge he delivered. He told the jury, in so many words, that they had nothing to determine, except the fact of printing and publishing, and that, whether the defendant had committed a crime or not was no matter of consideration.'² The jury, after more than nine hours' deliberation, took the judge at his word, and returned a verdict of 'guilty of printing and publishing only,' which was in effect an acquittal.

Next month, on July 10, on another of the trials

¹ *State Trials*, vol. xx. p. 895.

² *Letters of Junius*, preface.

growing out of the Junius letter, when the case of John Miller, the publisher of 'The London Evening Post,' was before the court, the jury more boldly returned a distinct verdict of not guilty.¹

These verdicts were important triumphs, and secured practical immunity for Woodfall and all, except Almon, who were arraigned for participation in his offence, and they were followed by one of the most scathing of Junius's letters, the one of November 14, 1770, in which he held Lord Mansfield up to public scorn for much besides his effort to override the functions of a jury in trials for libel.² But Lord Mansfield's ruling, though loudly protested against in print and hotly debated in both houses of parliament, Charles James Fox supporting it and Edmund Burke eloquently denouncing it, was not reversed in his time, and furnished a pernicious precedent for tyrannising over the press during the next one-and-twenty years.³

Meanwhile the press advanced in spite of persecutions. The example set by Henry Sampson Woodfall in making 'The Public Advertiser' an enterprising and trustworthy retailer of general news and repository of instructive letters by able critics of the government, was followed more or less successfully by other editors; and as efficient service to journalism was rendered in other ways by his younger brother, William, who conducted 'The Morning Chronicle' for twenty years, from its commencement on June 28, 1769.⁴

¹ *State Trials*, vol. xx. p. 870.

² *Letters of Junius*, No. 41.

³ See the next chapter.

⁴ Dr. Charles Mackay, in his *Through the Long Day* (vol. i. p. 66), gives the names of the twenty original proprietors of *The Morning Chronicle*, appended to 'a deed signed on October 23, 1760'—apparently a misprint for 1769. Among these proprietors there were, besides William Woodfall, six booksellers—John Murray, William Griffin, T. Evans, J. Spilsbury, James Robson, and Peter Elmsley. Other proprietors were James Christie, the auctioneer, James Bowles, the stationer, George Kearsley, and William Kenrick, whose name stands first in the list.

William Woodfall deserves none the less to be honoured because, in the enthusiastic exercise of his peculiar talent, he cared more for the improvement of the craft to which he devoted himself than for his own pecuniary advantage. 'His memory,' we are told by one of his friends, 'was uncommonly retentive, and, were it not for this quality, he would probably have risen to affluence in a world upon which he entered with a competence, and left in very humble circumstances. Aided and incited, however, by this advantage, he explored a path hitherto unknown, and commenced a career of great but unprofitable labour—the fatiguing and difficult task of giving a report of the debates in the two houses of parliament on the night of the proceedings. In this line he attained the highest degree of celebrity, as well for the fidelity of his report as the quality and rapidity of his execution.' Before his time, no editors took the trouble, except on occasions of special importance, to publish on the morning of one day any report, or more than a bare account in a few lines, of the previous day's parliamentary debates, and often such reports as appeared were two or three days in arrear, and only inserted when room was found for them by lack of other matter. Woodfall made it his business, acting as his own reporter, to give all such intelligence not only with unusual promptness, but also with almost unprecedented fulness ; and in doing this he made good use of rare natural gifts. 'Without taking a note to assist his memory,' it is added, 'without the use of an amanuensis to ease his labour, he has been known to write sixteen columns after having sat in a crowded gallery for as many hours, without an interval of rest. He took pride in his exertion, which brought him more praise than profit. It wore down his constitution, which was naturally good, and when other papers, by the

division of labour produced the same length of details with an earlier publication, he yielded the contest.’¹ ‘His practice in the House of Commons during a debate,’ says another contemporary, ‘was to close his eyes, and to lean both hands on his stick. He was so well acquainted with the tone and manner of the several speakers that he only deviated from his customary position when a new member addressed the house, and, having heard his name, he had no subsequent occasion for further inquiry.’²

Permission thus to make himself at home in the gallery of the House of Commons, and to use his wonderful memory for the public instruction, was not obtained by William Woodfall without a hard struggle, in which others took part with him and preceded him. The devices by which Dr. Johnson and his rivals in the compilation of parliamentary debates evaded the rules of both houses in the time of George II. have already been noted. The early parliaments of George III. were more tenacious of their privilege as regards the exclusion of strangers than most of their forerunners, and violent measures were sometimes resorted to for keeping even peers out of the House of Commons and commoners out of the House of Lords, whenever matters were being discussed about which it was thought desirable that none but actual members should be informed. The meagre accounts of proceedings in either house which the weekly and daily newspapers furnished when they began to follow the example of the monthly magazines were generally short and not too accurate records of gossip obtained from members, and even these often brought those who published them into trouble. John Almon, who was the most enter-

¹ Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. i. p. 303.

² John Taylor, *Records of my Life*, vol. ii. p. 245.

prising precursor of William Woodfall, and whose reports appeared in 'The London Evening Post,' was the cause of several prosecutions, directed either against himself or against the printer of the paper. According to Almon, one member of the House of Peers who was particularly zealous in upholding its rights, made it his special business 'to examine the newspapers every day with the ardour that a hawk prowls for prey; whenever he found any lord's name printed in any paper, he immediately made a motion against the printer for a breach of privilege.' On one occasion three printers were fined 100*l.* apiece, and another 200*l.*, for an offence of this sort.¹ The House of Commons was less tyrannical or less able to control the journals which persisted in saying something about its proceedings nearly every day, but its members resented the insulting terms in which the reports were often given, and more frequently than ever when such scandals as the expulsion of Wilkes were being dealt with. George Onslow, for example, had to complain that he had been spoken of as 'little cocking George,' 'the little scoundrel,' and 'that little paltry, insignificant insect,' and that he and his cousin had been described as 'the constellations of the two bears, one being called the great and the other the little scoundrel.'²

At length on February 8, 1771, this Onslow not only complained but induced the house to summon R. Thompson, the printer of 'The Gazetteer,' and John Wheble, the printer of 'The Middlesex Journal,' to appear before it and answer to the charge of 'misrepresenting the speeches and reflecting on several members.' The offenders paid no heed to this order, five times

¹ Andrews, *British Journalism*, vol. i. p. 197.

² *Cavendish Debates*, cited by Sir Erskine May, *Constitutional History*, chapter vii.

repeated, and when an officer of the house was commissioned to take them into custody, he was mockingly refused admission to the rooms they occupied. A royal proclamation was then issued for their apprehension, and a reward of 50*l.* offered to anyone who gave them up. On March 12, moreover, similar complaints were made in the house against William Woodfall, of 'The Morning Chronicle,' T. Evans, of 'The London Packet,' Henry Baldwin, of 'The St. James's Chronicle,' T. Wright, of 'The Whitehall Evening Post,' John Miller, of 'The London Evening Post,' and J. Bladon, of 'The General Evening Post,' and their arrest, also, was ordered. Woodfall was reported to be already undergoing punishment by order of the House of Lords. Baldwin, Bladon, and Wright surrendered, apologised, and were discharged, and Miller, after hiding himself, surrendered and was imprisoned for a short time; but Evans wrote to the Speaker denying the right of the house to interfere with him, and Miller quietly ignored the order, as Wheble and Thompson had done.¹ Of Evans we lose sight, but a tough battle was fought over the three others.

It is fair to note that, though George III. signed the proclamation on which this struggle ensued, he did so under protest, and with doubt as to its expediency. 'It is highly necessary,' he wrote to Lord North, 'that this strange and lawless method of publishing debates in the papers should be put a stop to; but is not the House of Lords, as a court of record, the best court to bring such miscreants before? as it can fine as well as imprison, and as the lords have broader shoulders to

¹ *Journals of the House of Commons*, vol. xxxiii. pp. 149, 208, 234, 249–259. Parliamentary sanction of these proceedings was not obtained without much of what would now be called obstruction. There were twenty-three divisions, and one sitting lasted till past four in the morning. 'Posterity will bless the pertinaciousness of that day,' said Burke.

support any odium that this salutary measure may occasion in the minds of the vulgar.’¹

The recalcitrant printers were supported by Wilkes and the whole body of London democrats, and on March 14, Wheble, who was still at large, forwarded to the Speaker counsel’s opinion as to the illegality of the proclamation against him, and declared that it was his intention ‘to yield no obedience but to the laws of the land.’ Next day, however, he was apprehended by E. T. Carpenter, a journeyman printer, who was evidently in collusion with the champions of liberty, and brought up at the Guildhall, where Wilkes, as alderman of Farringdon Without, was at the moment sitting as magistrate. Wilkes at once discharged Wheble, binding him over to prosecute Carpenter for assault and false imprisonment, and wrote a letter of formal complaint to Lord Halifax, the secretary of state, concerning Wheble’s arrest by a person who was ‘neither a constable nor a peace officer of the city,’ and this not for any legal offence, but under a proclamation which was ‘in direct violation of the rights of an Englishman and of the chartered privileges of a citizen of this metropolis.’²

On this same 15th of March, Thompson, who had been arrested by another friendly printer, was taken before Alderman Oliver at the Mansion House, and by him similarly discharged as ‘not being accused of having committed any crime.’³

On the 16th more exciting business occurred. Wheble and Thompson had been arrested under cover of a royal proclamation. Miller was now taken into custody under a warrant from the Speaker, acted on by Whittam, a House of Commons messenger, who had

¹ *Correspondence with Lord North*, vol. i. p. 57.

² *Parliamentary History*, vol. xvii. p. 95.

³ *Ibid.*

forced his way into Miller's shop in order to find him. Miller protested, sent for a constable, and gave his captor into custody on a charge of assault and false imprisonment. Both were then taken to the Mansion House, where Brass Crosby, the lord mayor, was sitting, with Wilkes and Oliver to support him, and these magistrates, dismissing the charge against Miller, committed Whittam for trial at the next quarter sessions, Wilkes again writing to Lord Halifax to condemn the illegal proceedings against the printers.¹

All this was more than the government and its majority in the House of Commons could meekly submit to. On the 18th the lord mayor and Oliver, who were both members of the house, were ordered to appear on separate days in their places and answer for their conduct, and Wilkes, who had been deprived of his membership, was ordered to appear at the bar. 'I own,' wrote the king, 'I could have wished that Wilkes had not been ordered before the house, for he must be in gaol the next term if not given new life by some punishment inflicted on him, which will bring him new supplies ; and I do not doubt that he will hold such language that will oblige some notice to be taken of him.'² Wilkes instead of appearing, wrote to say that, as he had not been addressed as a member of parliament, the summons was informal and he should not obey it. It was twice repeated, but as on the third occasion his attendance was, apparently by design, appointed for a day on which the house was not sitting, the proceedings against him lapsed.³ In the meanwhile his colleagues had brought matters to a crisis.

¹ *Parliamentary History*, vol. xvii. p. 98.

² *Correspondence with Lord North*, vol. i. p. 66. Wilkes, it should be noted, was now, as nearly always, heavily in debt, and waiting for more of the public subscriptions on which he had learnt to rely.

³ *Parliamentary History*, vol. xvii. p. 113.

On March 19 Lord Mayor Crosby, though troubled with a violent attack of gout, drove up to Westminster, attended by an enthusiastic crowd of citizens, who could with difficulty be prevented from following him into the house itself. In his defence he quoted the city charters, and argued that he was bound by his office to protect all citizens from assault by outsiders of whatever sort, and after some altercation his request for leave to be further heard through counsel, 'so as they do not affect or controvert the privileges of the house,' was acceded to ; and a like permission was afterwards given to Alderman Oliver. Without waiting for the result, however, the house ordered the lord mayor's clerk to produce the city minute book, and compelled him, standing at the table, to erase from it the record of the proceedings against Whittam ; Burke and a great many other members, when their protests were unavailing, formally walking out of the house in order to emphasise their resentment of what Lord Chatham described as 'the act of a mob, not of a parliament.'¹

The next stage in the contest was reached on March 25, when Crosby and Oliver, accompanied by a larger and angrier crowd than before, which made so much noise outside that members could hardly hear one another speak, announced that, after due consideration, they did not intend to employ counsel, but were prepared to uphold their action. The house thereupon resolved that its privileges had been grossly violated. Crosby was allowed to go home for that evening, his friends unharnessing the horses and bearing him off in triumph to the Mansion House ; but Oliver, after declaring that he gloried in what he had done, and that, 'as he expected little from their justice, he defied their

¹ *Parliamentary History*, vol. xvii. pp. 117-121 ; Walpole, *Memoirs*, vol. iv. p. 294.

power,' was ordered to the Tower, after a fierce debate which continued till half-past three in the morning. At the next meeting of the house the lord mayor again attended, the crowd that came with him blocking up Palace Yard and rendering it very difficult for the ministerialist members, who were hustled and pelted with stones and mud, to reach the doors, and Lord North, who was injured in the fray, having his carriage broken to pieces. When the members had contrived to assemble, it was proposed that in consideration of the lord mayor's health he should be merely placed under the custody of the sergeant-at-arms, but this he refused. 'I ask no favour of this house,' he exclaimed; 'I crave no mercy from the treasury bench. I am ready to go to my noble friend at the Tower if the house shall order me. My conscience is clear, and tells me that I have kept my oath and done my duty to the city of which I have the honour to be chief magistrate, and to my country. I have no apology to make for having acted uprightly, and I fear not any resentment in consequence of such conduct.' To the Tower accordingly he was sent.¹

Lord Chatham expressed the view of moderate statesmen in blaming both sides in this struggle. 'Great,' he said, 'is the absurdity of the city in putting the quarrel on the exercise of the most tenable privilege the house is possessed of—a right to summon before them printers printing their debates during the session. Incomparable is the wrong-headedness and folly of the court, ignorant how to be twenty-four hours on good ground; for they have most ingeniously contrived to be guilty of the rankest tyranny in every step taken to assert the right.'² Junius, as was to have been ex-

¹ *Parliamentary History*, vol. xvii. pp. 125, 155-157; *Letters of Junius*, note to No. 44.

² *Grenville Papers*, vol. iv. p. 533.

pected, sided with the city against the court and its minions in both houses of parliament. 'The triplet union of crown, lords, and commons against England,' he wrote, signing himself 'an Englishman, and enemy to the cabinet therefore,' on March 25, the day before Crosby and Oliver were locked up, 'displays itself with a violence and candour which statesmen in other conspiracies seldom have adopted. It is no more a question of royal antipathy or feminine unrelenting resentment, it is not a single inconsequent act of arbitrary power, it is not the offensive individual, but the free constitution of this country whose destruction engages the influence of the crown and the authority of parliament. The House of Commons assume a power of imprisonment during pleasure for actions which the laws have not made criminal. They create a crime as well as a punishment. They call upon the king to support their illegality by a proclamation still more illegal, and the liberty of the press is the object of this criminal alliance. They expunge a recognisance, they stagnate the cause of justice, and thereby assume an absolute power over the law and property of Great Britain. The House of Lords have not been backward in *their* contribution to the scheme of slavery; for they have imprisoned and they have fined. The crime, like the punishment, was in their own bosom. They were *ex post facto* legislators. They were parties; they were judges; and, instead of a court of final judicature, acted as a court of criminal jurisdiction in the first instance. The three estates, instead of being a control upon each other, are let loose upon the constitution. The absolute power of the crown, by the assistance of the handmaid corruption, puts on the disguise of privilege. In the arrangement of hostility, the associated senate takes the lead, and illegal proclamation brings up the rear of oppres-

sion. The cabal advances upon us as an army once did upon a town—it displayed before it a multitude of nuns, and overawed the resistance of the besieged by the venerable appearance. So the cabinet puts forth the countenance of parliament, and marches against the constitution under the shelter of the hallowed frailty.’¹

Hallowed frailty, as embodied in a courtly House of Commons, was not much respected in this instance. Junius wrote other letters in ‘The Public Advertiser,’ and there was a constant storm of complaint both inside and outside the city, while Lord Mayor Crosby and Alderman Oliver held high festival in the Tower, visited by Wilkes and all the other leading democrats and by Burke and all the other intelligent politicians, until May 8, when, parliament being prorogued and there being no such pretext as even Lord North’s government could find for detaining them any longer, the prisoners were set free.

Neither that nor any other government dared to renew the war. From this time forth, though the right was not recognised, no systematic attempt was made to prevent the publication of parliamentary reports in the newspapers. Wilkes and his friends had won a great victory, and a most important advance had been made towards securing the liberty of the press and extending its usefulness.

Hindrances were offered from time to time. While the American war was being discussed in 1775 and 1776, the galleries were frequently closed in obedience to the request of some member who moved that the standing order excluding strangers be read, to the annoyance of sensible legislators as well as of the public. On one occasion, when the reading of the standing order had been omitted, Charles James Fox, who had

¹ *Miscellaneous Letters of Junius*, No 92.

supported the ministry in its arbitrary conduct five years before, thought fit to make an ampler speech than he had intended, alleging that, 'as strangers were admitted here for one day, it was necessary for him to repeat what he had often urged,' and in January 1778, when Wilkes's Westminster opponent, Colonel Luttrell, moved the exclusion of strangers on account of what he regarded as 'newspaper misrepresentation' of his conduct, Fox frankly declared that 'he was convinced the true and only method of preventing misrepresentation was by throwing open the gallery and making the debates and decisions of the house as public as possible.'¹ As late as 1803 it was complained that, when Pitt was making a great speech on the French war, 'by a new arrangement of the Speaker's, strangers were excluded till so late an hour that the newspaper printers could not get in, and of course no part of Pitt's speech can be printed.'² We are now and then reminded, even at the present day, that reporters are only admitted to the galleries by favour, and for a long while after that favour had come to be regarded as almost a right, they were not allowed to write down in the gallery anything they had heard. In 1807, for instance, some commotion was caused by a member of the House of Lords who called attention to the fact that a stranger was taking notes.³

William Woodfall's unusual powers of memory were, under these conditions, of immense service to him and the readers he catered for, and his lively reports secured great popularity for 'The Morning Chronicle,' though many others did their utmost to rival him, and borrowed

¹ *Parliamentary History*, vol. xviii. pp. 221, 540, 963, 1325; vol. xix. p. 647.

² *Malmesbury Correspondence*, vol. iv. p. 262.

³ *The Court and Cabinets of George III.*, vol. iv. p. 150.

largely from his reports. He came to be an autocrat in this department of newspaper work, and naturally set a high value on his achievements. His critics laughed at him for expecting that the House of Commons should consult his convenience rather than that he should meekly adapt himself to its plans. 'Yes, sir,' he said to a friend who commiserated with him one day on his arduous labours, 'and Charles Fox to have a debate on a Saturday! What, does he think the reporters are made of iron?'¹

Though he profited much by the success with which Wilkes and others had fought out the battle with the government which his reporting zeal had done much to bring about, William Woodfall was not a Wilkite, perhaps less of an one than his elder brother. He and his associates on 'The Morning Chronicle' were fond of sneering at the city democrats. 'Squib upon squib,' we read in the number for May 4, 1772, 'is daily thrown out against that unfortunate man Wilkes, the undoubted consequence of envy from some and malice from others; but he, notwithstanding, as daily improves in his lustre as a diamond would do in the furnace, and while he laughs at the howlings of his enemies, he concludes with this thought, that if flies buzz about one it is foolish to take notice of them, and only deems it necessary to crush them whenever they attempt to sting—and, good God, how seldom does that happen! They bark and rave, but do not bite.' And lest anyone should miss the irony, it was added, after an intervening paragraph, 'Never more let it be believed that he whose private character exhibits one continued scene of fraud and villany can ever make a real honest patriot. The same heart must and will operate in the same man, whether he is in the closet or

¹ John Taylor, *Records of my Life*, vol. ii. p. 249.

in the senate. For such an one to acknowledge his frauds upon individuals, and yet pretend honesty to the multitude, is such a glaring inconsistency that it requires the prejudice of the blindest partiality to be for a moment deceived by so flimsy a defence.'

Short pungent paragraphs like those, though by no means an invention of William Woodfall's, were a speciality of 'The Morning Chronicle' under his management, and did much to make it attractive. About a dozen or fifteen, filling a column or more, generally appeared every day unless they were displaced by long parliamentary reports or other matter, and were in lieu of elaborate leading articles or such letters as were plentiful in 'The Public Advertiser,' though of these there was a fair sprinkling. Another point on which the younger Woodfall set great store was his dramatic criticism. Whenever he was not in the gallery or his editor's room, he was in a theatre or one of the coffee-houses frequented by Garrick, Foote, and the other actors of his day. 'He was so passionately fond of theatrical representations,' we are told, 'as never to have missed the first performance of a new piece for at least forty years, and the public had so good an opinion of his taste that his criticisms were decisive of the fall or fortune of the piece and the performer.'¹ The copious notices of new plays that appeared in 'The Morning Chronicle' are a neglected mine of wealth for students of theatrical history. Besides these careful and usually intelligent dramatic criticisms, moreover, a great feature of 'The Morning Chronicle' was its daily column or half-column of 'masquerade intelligence.' With such material, and with miscellaneous news, about seven or eight of the sixteen columns of the paper were generally filled, the rest being occupied with advertisements.

¹ Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. i. p. 304.

One of the many anecdotes on record about William Woodfall illustrates Richard Brinsley Sheridan's character more than his. A scurrilous attack on Sheridan having appeared in 'The Bath Chronicle,' the playwright and politician asked his friend to reprint it in 'The Morning Chronicle.' Woodfall objected to help in circulating a slander which in its original form had not obtained wide hearing. 'That is the very reason,' replied Sheridan, 'for as I can refute every part of that letter, I wish the attack and the answer spread over the kingdom instead of being confined to a provincial paper.' The article was therefore reprinted, but, it is added, 'Mr. Sheridan, though applied to for the refutation, never wrote a syllable on the subject, and, from mere negligence or contempt, thus disseminated a calumny against himself.'¹

A prominent, and for some time an impudent, rival of 'The Morning Chronicle' and 'The Public Advertiser' was 'The Morning Post and Daily Advertiser,' commenced in November 1772, in a form designed to evade the stamp duty, but soon reshaped as a regular newspaper and a shameless organ of the king's party and the ministry now presided over by Lord North. Its editor from 1775 till 1780 was Henry Bate, a young clergyman, who, inheriting a large fortune and assuming his benefactor's name of Dudley in the latter year, was afterwards made a baronet and died in 1824 as Sir Henry Bate Dudley.² In the opinion of his friends Bate was 'constituted both in mind and body for the army or navy rather than for the church.'³ He wrote licentious plays in the intervals of his gallantries and debaucheries and of his somewhat more serious work on

¹ John Taylor, vol. ii. p. 122.

² *Public Characters of all Nations* (1823), vol. i. p. 538.

³ John Taylor, vol. i. p. 102.

'The Morning Post.' 'There was a sportive severity in his writings,' we are told, 'which gave a new character to the public press. It may be said that he was too personal in his strictures in general and in his allusions to many characters of his time, but it may also be said that they were generally characters of either sex who had rendered themselves conspicuous for folly, vice, or some prominent absurdity by which they became proper objects for satirical animadversion.' And it is added that 'he saw so much of the vice and vanity of the world as to excite something of misanthropic feeling, which gave vigour, spirit, and severity to his pen.'¹ He was a scurrilous writer, and under his management 'The Morning Post' acquired an evil reputation as a retailer of coarse social gossip, besides being an advocate of the debasing policy of the ministry, and this reputation it did what it could, to maintain for some time after he left it. Bate was the 'certain clergyman of extraordinary character who, by exerting his talents in writing on temporary topics and displaying uncommon intrepidity, had raised himself to affluence,' and concerning whom Boswell says he 'maintained that we ought not to be indignant at his success, for merit of every sort was entitled to reward.' 'Sir,' answered Dr. Johnson, 'I will not allow this man to have merit; no, sir, what he has is rather the contrary. I will, indeed, allow him courage, and on this account we so far give him credit. We have more respect for a man who robs boldly on the highway than for a fellow who jumps out of a ditch and knocks you down behind your back. Courage is a quality so necessary for maintaining virtue that it is always respected, even when it is associated with vice.'²

¹ John Taylor, vol. i. pp. 102, 104.

² Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, chap. 1v.

Bate's vice-tainted courage was put to the test on January 13, 1777, when he was challenged by George Robinson Stoney for publishing some gross libels on Lady Strathmore in 'The Morning Post.' 'Mr. Bate,' it is reported, 'had taken every possible method consistent with honour to convince Mr. Stoney that the insertion of the paragraphs was wholly without his knowledge, to which Mr. Stoney gave no credit, and insisted on the satisfaction of a gentleman or the discovery of the author. This happened some days before, but meeting, as it were by accident, in the Strand on the day here mentioned, they adjourned to the Adelphi tavern, called for a room, shut the door, and being furnished with pistols, discharged them at each other without effect. They then drew swords, and Mr. Stoney received a wound in the breast and arm, and Mr. Bate one in the thigh. Mr. Bate's sword bent and slanted against the captain's breastbone, which Mr. Bate apprising him of, Captain Stoney called to him to straighten it, and in the interim while the sword was under his foot for that purpose, the door was broken open, or the death of one of the parties would most certainly have been the issue.'¹

In 1780 Bate was prosecuted for libelling the Duke of Richmond by charging him, in 'The Morning Post,' with treasonably communicating with the French, whose invasion of England was then feared, and for this offence he was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment.² His connection with 'The Morning Post' was thus severed, but he soon afterwards, as Bate Dudley, started 'The Morning Herald,' the first number

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, February 1777. 'It certainly seems almost incredible to a person living in our time,' said Macaulay in his review of Croker's *Boswell*, 'that any human being should ever have stooped to fight with a writer in *The Morning Post*.'

² Douglas, *Reports of Cases in the King's Bench*, p. 376.

of which appeared on November 1 in the same year. This new paper, of which we shall see something hereafter, became the organ of the Prince of Wales's party in the opposition it offered to the king and his ministers, and as such it had considerable influence. Four years earlier, in November 1776, another daily paper, 'The General Advertiser,' had been commenced by William Cooke, but neither of these two was at this time of much importance.

After Bate's removal from 'The Morning Post' it was edited by another and a yet more unworthy clergyman, William Jackson, who under the pseudonym of Curtius had cruelly libelled Foote in 'The Public Ledger,' and who was connected with 'The Whitehall Evening Post' and other papers. He had charge of 'The Morning Post' in 1784, when, as Scrutineer, he fiercely attacked Fox on the occasion of his election for Westminster, but in such a way as to keep clear of an action for libel. Jackson's style of controversy pleased some readers. 'He was,' according to one of his colleagues, 'a very able writer, and gave such a variety to his political compositions as rendered them very amusing as well as expressive.' He had faults, however, one of which was that 'he generally wrote in a very large hand upon very large sheets of paper, which appeared like maps or atlases spread over the table.' 'The proprietor,' it is added, 'unexpectedly entering the room one evening, suddenly retreated in dismay, and afterwards observed that Mr. Jackson should be dismissed, otherwise he would ruin the property by the vast quantity of paper he used in writing his political articles.'¹ But the threat was not acted upon, and Jackson was allowed to waste paper during some years upon his scurrilous scribbling.

After him 'The Morning Post' was entrusted to a

¹ John Taylor, vol. ii. pp. 269, 323-328.

slightly better man, John Taylor, the author of 'Monsieur Tonson,' who had previously been its dramatic critic, and who was avowedly promoted to the editorship in order that he might forward the cause of a clique at court in return for a substantial bribe. Dr. Wolcott, best known as Peter Pindar, wrote 'whimsical articles' under Taylor, who said 'Mr. Merry and I used to scribble verses in conjunction.' 'I have often,' Taylor reported, 'remained at the office till three o'clock in the morning to revise, correct, and guard against the accidental insertion of any improper article, moral or political.' He was not kept up so late, however, by business alone. 'We were pleasantly supplied with punch,' he acknowledged, 'and as far as our limited party admitted, the meeting might be considered as Comus's court.' But this bacchanalian editor only held his post for two years. He was dismissed because the proprietor, as he tells us, 'thought I had not devil enough for the conduct of a public journal.' Of the proprietor who thus judged him, and who was the same who objected to Jackson's extravagant use of paper, but whose name is not recorded, Taylor had no high opinion. One of his malicious stories about him is that he once complained that there were not enough 'antidotes' in the paper. He meant 'anecdotes,' says Taylor, but 'not understanding the meaning of the word, it is not wonderful he should have forgotten the sound.'¹

In such hands 'The Morning Post' could hardly be expected to take high rank as a guide of public opinion. 'The Morning Chronicle' also lost ground for a time, and William Woodfall quarrelled with its proprietors. In 1788 he started a new evening paper, 'The Diary,' intended to give more fully than ever the parliamentary reports and theatrical criticisms in which he prided him-

¹ John Taylor, vol. ii. pp. 265-270.

self, but this venture was not successful. 'Unfortunately for himself and his family,' says his friendly biographer, 'he placed all his hopes on the most precarious species of property, and became the proprietor of a newspaper which his talents raised to eminence. But the talents of no individual could secure it a permanent station upon that eminence. The paper fell, and with it fell his hopes.' He died in 1803, and his elder brother, Henry Sampson Woodfall, who had parted with 'The Public Advertiser' in 1793, followed him two years afterwards, in 1805.¹ Other men had long before superseded them as leaders of newspaper enterprise.

Journalism was making progress in spite of all the efforts of court and parliament to repress it, whether by attacking those who ventured upon bold criticism of the authorities and bold advocacy of popular rights, by continuance of Walpole's policy of bribery, or by heaping fiscal burdens upon it. These fiscal burdens were made very heavy by successive acts of parliament passed in George III.'s reign. Both the stamp duty of a halfpenny on every half-sheet sold and the tax of a shilling on every advertisement printed, which had been imposed in 1712, had been doubled in 1757. The stamp duty was raised to three-halfpence in 1776, and to two-pence in 1789. The newspapers, however, were not only enlarged from time to time until they reached the full limit of size allowed under the Stamp Act, but, notwithstanding the higher prices it was necessary to charge for them, there was an almost constant increase in the number of copies distributed. The stamps issued by the treasury in 1753 amounted to 7,411,757, in 1760 to 9,464,790, and in 1775, to 12,680,000, showing a growth during two-and-twenty years of the daily average from 23,673 to 41,615. The year's number of

¹ Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. i. pp. 301, 303.

stamps, however, had only risen to 14,217,371 in 1780, and ten years later, in 1790, doubtless in consequence of the augmented duty, it had fallen to 14,035,639.¹

These were small aggregates for all the daily, weekly, and other newspapers circulated in Great Britain, when compared with the figures of the present time, but they were thought large a century ago, and many besides Crabbe were amazed at the variety and profusion of the journalistic literature offered to the public.

For, soon as morning dawns with roseate hue,
The 'Herald' of the morn arises too,
'Post' after 'Post' succeeds, and all day long
'Gazettes' and 'Ledgers' swarm, a motley throng.
When evening comes she comes with all her train
Of 'Ledgers,' 'Chronicles,' and 'Posts' again,
Like bats appearing, when the sun goes down,
From holes obscure and corners of the town.

Crabbe's account of the varied matter contained in the newspapers of his day, and of the ways, sometimes more clever than honest, in which they met the requirements of all classes, is amusing.

Some, champions for the rights that prop the crown ;
Some, sturdy patriots, sworn to pull them down ;
Some, neutral powers, with secret forces fraught,
Wishing for war, but willing to be bought ;
While some to every side and party go,
Shift every friend, and join with every foe ;
Like sturdy rogues in privateers, they strike
This side and that the foes of both alike—
A traitor crew, who thrive in troubled times,
Feared for their force, and courted for their crimes.
Such are our guides. How many a peaceful head,
Born to be still, have they to wrangling led !
How many an honest zealot stolen from trade,
And faction's tools of pious pastors made !

Crabbe was severe on the papers which fomented

¹ Timperley, *Encyclopædia of Literary and Typographical Anecdotes*, p. 806.

party strife, and yet more on those in which anonymous writers sought to degrade and corrupt society.

Screened by such means, here scandal whets her quill ;
Here slander shoots unseen, whene'er she will ;
Here fraud and falsehood labour to deceive,
And folly aids them both, impatient to believe.

Yet he was forced to admit that his warnings were in vain.

To you all readers turn ; and they can look
Pleased on a paper, who abhor a book.
Those who ne'er deigned their Bible to peruse,
Would think it hard to be denied their news.
Sinners and saints, the wisest with the weak,
Here mingle tastes and one amusement seek.
This, like the public inn, provides a treat
Where each promiscuous guest sits down to eat,
And such this mental food, as we may call
Something to all men, and to some men all.

The 'motley page' of the newspaper, according to Crabbe, afforded entertainment 'to either sex and every age,' as soon as, brought into the house 'damp from the press,' it had been dried before the fire.

Then eager every eye surveys the part
That brings its favourite subject to the heart :
Grave politicians look for facts alone,
And gravely add conjectures of their own ;
The sprightly nymph, who never broke her rest
For tottering crowns or mighty lands oppressed,
Finds broils and battles, but neglects them all
For songs and suits, a birthday or a ball :
The keen warm man o'erlooks each idle tale
For 'Moneys Wanted' and 'Estates on Sale' ;
While some with equal minds to all attend,
Pleased with each part, and grieved to find an end.
So charm the news. But we, who far from town,
Wait till the postman brings the packet down,
Once in a week a vacant day behold,
And stay for tidings till they're three days old.
That day arrives : no welcome post appears,
But the dull morn a sullen aspect wears ;

We meet, but, ah ! without our wonted smile,
To talk of headaches and complain of bile :
Sullen we ponder o'er a dull repast,
Nor feast the body while the mind must fast.
A master passion is the love of news :
Not music so commands, nor so the muse.
Give poets claret, they grow idle soon :
Feed the musician, and he's out of tune :
But the sick mind, of this disease possessed,
Flies from all cure and sickens when at rest. ¹

¹ Crabbe, *The Newspaper* (1785).

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LIBEL ACT.

BEFORE AND AFTER 1792.

THE passing of the Libel Act in 1792 was a momentous incident in newspaper history. The freedom of the press was not finally secured by it. Its immediate consequences, indeed, or rather the consequences of the political turmoil that caused it, were for awhile apparently, and with more than appearance to the parties most concerned, in many ways disastrous. But it was a solid basis for the building up of fresh liberties, and all that seemed disastrous at the time helped to promote and expand those liberties, and to prepare the way for new departures.

Whether or not Lord Mansfield's direction to the juries before whom Henry Sampson Woodfall and others were tried in the summer of 1770 for publishing Junius's letter to King George III. was as unwarrantable as Junius, and critics more trustworthy and less biassed than Junius, declared it to be, it established a pernicious precedent by which newspapers suffered grievously during many years, and which was only upset after a prolonged struggle. That direction, as we have seen, in effect laid it down that it was the function of the crown or the government, not of a jury, to decide whether any published matter complained of was libellous, that all a jury had to do was to ascertain whether

the person accused of publishing it had really done so. Actions for libel initiated by private persons were only, of course, affected by Lord Mansfield's ruling in so far as they were court favourites whose cases were taken up by the government, and thus in effect made occasions for crown prosecutions. But most of the actions for libel brought in George III.'s reign, and for some time afterwards, were either of this latter sort or avowedly crown cases, raised for the punishment of political offenders; and a most dangerous weapon was placed in the hands of ministers and courtiers. Lord Camden, who was a great lawyer, but in no sense a democrat, saw the danger, and boldly declared in the House of Peers that 'Lord Mansfield's doctrine is not the law of England.'¹ It passed for law, however, until 1792, in spite of repeated protests by many besides Lord Camden.

There was an important debate on the subject in the House of Commons on December 6, 1770, when Mr. Serjeant Glyn moved for a committee 'to inquire into the administration of criminal justice and the proceedings of the judges in Westminster Hall, particularly in cases affecting the liberty of the press and the constitutional power and duty of juries.' Charles James Fox, not then a reformer, prevailed upon the house, though only by a majority of six, to approve the course adopted by the government for putting a stop to 'infamous lampoons and satires,' to pay no heed to the impudent demands of incapable outsiders, and to rest content with the guidance of 'blameless judges,' subject to such control as parliament was fit to exercise over them. 'Let us,' he said, 'act according to the dictates of honour and conscience, and be at peace with our own minds. It is thus that we shall sooner or later regain the confidence

¹ *Parliamentary History*, vol. xvi. p. 1321.

of our constituents if we have lost it, and not by humouring, as foolish nurses humour great lubberly boys, the wayward whims of a misled multitude. The characteristic of this house should be a firm and manly steadiness, an unshaken perseverance in the pursuit of great and noble plans of general utility, and not a wavering, inconstant fluctuation of counsels, regulated by the shifting of the popular breeze. If we are not to judge for ourselves, but to be ever at the command of the vulgar, and their capricious shouts and hisses, I cannot see what advantage the nation can reap from a representative body which they might not have reaped from a tumultuous assembly of themselves, collected at random on Salisbury Plain or Runnymede.' In an eloquent speech Burke vainly protested against such language, and insisted both on the right of the nation to criticise the actions of the House of Commons nominally elected by it, and on the right of juries to settle all questions of fact in libel cases as well as in others which were nominally submitted to them. As for juries, he said, they might err, but so might judges, and the surest way of judges' falling into error was for them to 'pretend to superior sanctity,' and to claim an authority not legally possessed by them. Domineered over by such judges the courts must lose all their value. 'To the people they appear the temples of idols and false oracles, or rather as the dwellings of truth and justice converted into dens of thieves and robbers. For what greater robbers can there be than those who rob men of their laws and liberties?'¹

It was in some respects unfortunate that the questions as to the function of juries in libel cases and the liberty of the press were as much mixed up as they were

¹ William Woodfall's report of the debate, cited in a note to the preface of *Letters of Junius*.

at this time with the agitation led by Wilkes and his friends. Men like Burke and Junius, disliking Wilkes, had the good sense to distinguish between the agitators and the principles they fought for ; but there were few such, and the majority in parliament as well as all the courtiers were willing enough to stifle liberty, if they could, in their efforts to crush its blustering champions. The fate of Mr. Serjeant Glyn's motion in December 1770, therefore, was shared by a similar motion brought forward by Dowdeswell on March 7, 1771. 'Whereas doubts and controversies have arisen at various times concerning the rights of jurors to try the whole matter laid in indictments and informations for seditious and other libels, and whereas trials by juries would be of none or imperfect effect if the jurors were not held to be competent to try the whole matter aforesaid,' Dowdeswell's bill proposed 'that jurors, duly impanelled and sworn to try the issue between the king and the defendant upon any indictment or information for a seditious libel, or a libel under any other denomination or description, shall be held and reputed competent to all intents and purposes, in law and in right, to try every part of the matter laid or charged in such indictment or information, comprehending the criminal intention of the defendant and the civil tendency of the libel charged, as well as the mere fact of the publication thereof, and the application by innuendo of blanks, initial letters, pictures, and other devices ; any opinion, question, ambiguity, or doubt to the contrary notwithstanding.' Sir George Savile seconded this motion, Burke supported it in one of his ablest speeches, and several other members argued in favour of its principle, while not a single minister or ministerialist opposed it in debate.¹

¹ *Parliamentary History*, vol. xvii. p. 43 ; *The Public Advertiser*, March 13, 1771 ; *Burke's Works*, vol. x. p. 109 (1812 edition).

It was shelved, however, on a question of adjournment, by a majority of 218 to 72, and parliament was too busy with other subjects to reconsider the matter during twenty years.

Meanwhile there was a long series of press prosecutions by the crown, conducted on the lines laid down by Lord Mansfield,¹ and many came to be of the same opinion as John Almon, a frequent victim of this persecution, who said, 'A man had better make his son a tinker than a printer or a bookseller. The laws of tin he can understand, but the law of libel is unwritten, uncertain, and undefinable. It is one thing to-day and another to-morrow. No man can tell what it is. It is sometimes what the king or queen pleases ; sometimes what the minister pleases ; sometimes what the attorney-general pleases.'²

Almon appears to have been the author of an article which appeared in 'The London Evening Post' for February 2, 1773, in which the notorious Earl of Sandwich, Wilkes's friend at one time and bitter enemy at another, and now the first lord of the admiralty, was accused of having sold an office of trust in his department for 2,000*l*. The accusation was well supported by evidence adduced at the trial, and hardly denied by Sandwich, whose character was so well known that it could not be damaged by any statement made against him. But both Almon and the publisher, John Miller, the same man who had defied the government and parliament in 1771 when assailed for printing Almon's

¹ In the Parliamentary Papers in 1830 (No. 608) is a 'return of all prosecutions during the reigns of George III. and George IV. under the direction of the attorney or the solicitor-general, for libels or other misdemeanours against members of his majesty's government, or against other persons acting in their official capacity.'

² Bentham's description was more concise. 'Anything which any man, at any time, for any reason, chooses to be offended with, is a libel.'

reports of debates, were obnoxious to the authorities. Accordingly Miller was brought up for trial in June, and Lord Mansfield, insisting that the attempt to prove the truth of the allegation aggravated its wickedness, induced the compliant jury to give a verdict for 2,000*l*.¹ That was a penalty almost ruinous to the paper, and unparalleled in those days. Sixteen months later, on November 21, 1774, Fox only obtained 100*l*. for a libel upon him which had been published by John Williams, who, however, was also imprisoned for a month. On July 3, 1776, moreover, though Lord Bolingbroke claimed 2,000*l*. on account of disparaging remarks upon him which William Woodfall had published in 'The Morning Chronicle,' only 20*l*. was awarded him ; and on the 10th of the same month an action brought by Lord Chatham against Henry Sampson Woodfall of 'The Public Advertiser' was dismissed.² The Woodfalls were not in favour with the authorities, but neither were Chatham and Bolingbroke, and consequently we may assume that justice in these cases was allowed to take its course.

More important than these libel cases, or scores of others that might be mentioned, was one which occurred in 1778, but in which, though it forms part of the history of the struggle for liberty of the press, no newspaper was concerned. For issuing what was considered a seditious pamphlet, the then dean of St. Asaph was condemned under Lord Mansfield's ruling. Erskine, at that time a young man of twenty-eight, and only just called to the bar, made his start in forensic life as counsel for the defence, and, the case going against him, moved for a new trial. This was refused ; but Erskine con-

¹ Almon, *Biographical, Literary, and Personal Anecdotes*, vol. i. pp. 287-321.

² Andrews, vol. i. p. 209.

trived to get the dean discharged on another issue, and the proceedings afforded him opportunity for a masterly exposition of the fallacy and iniquity of the law of libel as it was then interpreted, which Lord Mansfield sneered at as 'puerile rant and declamation,' but which Fox declared to be 'the finest argument in the English language.'¹ It converted Fox to opinions he had formerly denounced, and was the commencement, not only of Erskine's splendid career as a lawyer, but also of his persistent advocacy all through that career of freedom, within reasonable limits, in the utterance of opinion.

An inferior man whom the state of the libel law helped to bring into prominence was John Horne, known after 1782 as Horne Tooke. He had begun in emulation of Junius to write for 'The Public Advertiser' in 1769, and had in 1770 been fined 400*l.* for libelling George Onslow, but had apparently avoided paying the money by, as Junius alleged, selling himself to the ministry.² He quarrelled with Wilkes, Junius, and all the leading men with whom he professed to be associated for the public good, and on his own showing he fairly earned the contempt with which they regarded him. Like many other unworthy agitators, however, he sometimes did useful work. He was a prominent organiser of a Society for the Support of the Bill of Rights, which found funds for carrying on the popular movements in which Wilkes and his friends were engaged, and also for the maintenance of its promoters; and after he had seceded from that organisation he founded a Constitutional Society for forwarding in England the interests of the disaffected American colonies. Horne thrived on libels. At one time, in 1774, his

¹ May, *Constitutional History*, chapter ix.

² *Letters of Junius*, No. 52.

wealthy friend William Tooke, whose name and fortune he inherited, being anxious to prevent an Enclosure Bill which would interfere with his property, Horne deliberately wrote for 'The Public Advertiser' a scurrilous letter attacking Sir Fletcher Norton, the Speaker of the House of Commons. This letter, as he calculated, called attention to the matter in which he was interested, and seems to have achieved its object. As Horne had influence with the government, moreover, he and Henry Sampson Woodfall received no heavier punishment than a reprimand for publishing it. Woodfall at other times, and many others, had to suffer more severely for the busybody's recklessness. In February 1777, John Miller and three other printers were fined 100*l.* apiece for publishing the 'treasonable' announcements of the Constitutional Society, and Horne was himself in the following July brought before Lord Mansfield and ordered to pay a fine of 200*l.*, and to be imprisoned for twelve months, for sending similar announcements to 'The Morning Chronicle,' 'The Public Advertiser,' and 'The London Packet.' If the fine was paid, it was doubtless by some one else, and, through his friendly relations with the authorities, Horne's imprisonment was only nominal.¹

In many cases, it may be assumed, the vindictive sentences of imprisonment passed upon printers, publishers, and authors, for alleged libels were either not enforced or made light and curtailed by the good nature or the corruptibility of the gaolers. Were it not so, the King's Bench and other prisons would always have been

¹ Andrews, vol. i. pp. 213-218. Horne Tooke, who henceforth had little to do with newspapers, is chiefly memorable on account of his trial for treason in 1794, when Erskine, by one of his most famous speeches, procured his acquittal. Professor Thorold Rogers has written an elaborate apology for him in his *Historical Essays*, where Wilkes is less kindly dealt with.

overcrowded, and the newspaper men hardly ever at their posts. In 1781 a single paragraph—or the same paragraph with slight variations, and in one case somewhat elaborated—which had given offence to the Russian ambassador, brought heavy punishments on seven persons. On July 4 the printer of ‘The London Courant,’ who had first issued the paragraph, was ordered to be kept in prison for a year, after standing for an hour in the pillory outside the Royal Exchange; the printer of ‘The Noon Gazette,’ a short-lived paper, in which it had appeared in an aggravated form, was condemned to prison for eighteen months, and fined 200*l.*; the publisher of ‘The Morning Herald,’ which Henry Bate Dudley had started in the previous year, was fined 100*l.* and committed to prison for twelve months; and Mary Say, the printer of ‘The Gazetteer,’ was, in consideration of her sex, let off with half a year’s imprisonment and a fine of 50*l.* And on July 5 two printers of ‘The Middlesex Journal’ and the printers of ‘The St. James’s Chronicle’ were, on account of the same paragraph, fined 100*l.* each, the first two being also imprisoned for a year.¹

These and all the earlier newspaper prosecutions had been conducted under Lord North’s administration, and the policy was not altered till after Lord Mansfield had ceased, in 1788, to be chief justice. It was continued by the younger Pitt, who became premier in 1784, after efforts had been successively made by Lord Rockingham, by Lord Shelburne, and by Fox and North to govern the country. In February 1786 ‘The Morning Herald’ and ‘The General Advertiser’ ventured to repeat a scandal then current to the effect that Pitt had used his official knowledge to help him in speculating on the Stock Exchange to the extent of 10,000*l.*,

¹ *Gentleman’s Magazine*, August 1781.

and for this he claimed damages from each paper to a like amount. Juries were growing more independent, however, and Erskine was counsel for the defendants ; so, although verdicts were given against them, the fines were limited, in the one case to 250*l.*, and in the other to 150*l.*¹ In the same year Henry Sampson Woodfall had to pay 100*l.* for libelling Burke, and another 100*l.* to Lord Loughborough, the chief justice of the Court of Common Pleas, for ‘intending to vilify him by causing him to be suspected of being in bad circumstances, and not able to pay his debts or willing to pay them without an execution.’² In 1788 Mary Say, of ‘The Gazetteer,’ was again prosecuted, this time for certain disparaging remarks about Pitt with reference to the impeachment of Sir Elijah Impey, and in 1790 Sampson Perry, editor of a scurrilous paper, ‘The Argus,’ was fined and imprisoned for accusing Pitt of having, for stock-jobbing purposes, falsified an announcement in ‘The Gazette’ and kept back important intelligence respecting the Nootka Sound difficulty.³

Libels of that sort, intended to prejudice the prime minister, and at a time when England was deeply involved in complications about to result in its stupendous war with France, certainly deserved some punishment—that is, if the government of the day was unwise enough to think that it could improve its position by quarrelling with obscure slanderers ; and by this time the way was prepared for a reversal of the tyrannical interference with the rights of juries which Lord Mansfield had insisted upon. Without that arbitrary strengthening of the power of the crown, as later events abundantly demonstrated, the crown had ample means of tyranny, and there was no further need for Lord

¹ Almon, vol. i. pp. 360–366.

² Andrews, vol. i. p. 228.

³ Knight Hunt, vol. ii. p. 65.

Mansfield's precedent. A memorable trial which had occurred in 1789 helped materially to bring about the long-deferred reform.

In this case, as in that of 1779, Erskine was the victor, and the second, like the first, was not a newspaper case, though one directly affecting the interests of newspapers. All through the years during which the impeachment of Warren Hastings was being threatened and carried on, the daily and weekly papers teemed with articles, letters, and paragraphs on the subject in which strong language was used on both sides ; but little notice was taken of it.¹ A pamphlet written by a clergyman named Logan, and issued by Stockdale, the publisher, in 1789, denouncing the House of Commons as corrupt and unjust, and angrily supporting the cause of the defendant in the trial which had been commenced a year before, was, however, held to be a scandalous and seditious libel. Proceedings were instituted against Stockdale, and the jury was expected, as usual, to do no more than certify the fact of publication, leaving the crown to arrange nearly all the rest. Fortunately Lord Kenyon was now chief justice, and he allowed Erskine, as Stockdale's champion, to insist on his being judged,

¹ In 1788 Markham, a member of the House of Commons, called attention to a newspaper paragraph stating 'that the trial of Mr. Hastings was to be put off for another session, unless the House of Lords had spirit enough to put an end to so shameful a business.' 'After some remarks upon the scandalous licentiousness of the press,' we read in *The Annual Register* (vol. xxxi. p. 164), 'a motion was made and carried unanimously for prosecuting the printer of the paper. In the course of the conversation that this motion gave rise to, Mr. Burke read from one of the public prints a curious paper, purporting to be a bill of charges made by the editor upon Major Scott for sundry articles inserted in the paper on his account. They chiefly consisted of speeches, letters, paragraphs, composed by him, and amongst the rest was this item, "'For attacking the veracity of Mr. Burke, 3s. 6d.'" Major Scott was the agent whom Warren Hastings unwisely employed to excite and keep up public interest in his case against the charges brought against him.

not by detached extracts from the pamphlet, but by its general tenour. This, Erskine urged, should excuse if it did not justify particular expressions that might be objected to ; and he laid down so clearly and forcibly the duty of allowing full and free discussion of public questions in print as well as by word of mouth, that the jury, accepting his arguments, which Kenyon did not dispute, returned a verdict of not guilty.¹ There was nothing very remarkable about this case except the fact that Erskine won it, and by such forensic tact and eloquence that all reasonable men were convinced of the propriety of effecting a reform which should leave the press less at the mercy of domineering judges and ministerial tools, and less dependent on the chance of juries being exceptionally bold and counsel being exceptionally able.

On May 20, 1791, Fox, who had just broken from Burke and had personal as well as public reasons for checking, if he could not crush the great power that Pitt had now acquired, proposed in the House of Commons a bill that should explain and amend the law of libel. Erskine's demonstration of the evils to be remedied, he said, was 'so eloquent, so luminous, and so convincing, that it wanted in opposition to it not a man but a giant,' and he preferred manly acceptance to gigantic defiance of sound constitutional views. Erskine seconded the motion, and stated his views yet once again with overwhelming force, pointing out the absurdity as well as the illegality of the rule then followed, seeing that, 'if upon a motion in arrest of judgment the innocence of the defendant's intention was argued before the court, the answer would be and was given uniformly, that the verdict of guilty had concluded the criminality of the intention, though the con-

¹ May, *Constitutional History*, chap. ix.

sideration of that question had been, by the judge's authority, wholly withdrawn from the jury at the trial.' Even the government sanctioned the proposal, Pitt declaring that it would be expedient 'to regulate the practice of the courts in the trial of libels, and render it conformable to the spirit of the constitution.' Fox's bill was introduced and quickly passed through all its stages in the House of Commons. The session was far advanced when it reached the House of Peers, however, and then Lord Thurlow, by getting it postponed for a month, contrived to shelve it for a year.¹

It was brought forward again on March 20, 1792, quickly and unanimously passed through the House of Commons, and, after much opposition in the House of Peers, Lord Thurlow and five others formally protesting against it as a sure prelude to 'the confusion and destruction of the law of England,' this notable and in its way most valuable Libel Act found a place in the statute book before the end of the session. It condemned by implication all the arbitrary proceedings of successive governments against newspapers in respect of real or pretended libels during the first half of George III.'s long reign, and, while securing for writers and printers, so far as could be, the right of full and honest trial before juries of their peers, it actually strengthened the hands of ministers in their efforts to put down what they regarded as newspaper sedition. Its immediate outcome or sequel, indeed, was a great increase of press prosecutions, though conducted with less contempt of the law, during the second half of the reign.

Much progress had been made and much fresh turmoil had arisen since the time of Wilkes's 'No. 45,' and of Junius's letters. King George, having broken loose

¹ *Parliamentary History*, vol. xxix. pp. 551-602, 726-742.

from the guidance of his mischievous mother and of such obnoxious courtiers as Lord Bute, had improved upon their teaching and developed new follies and political vices. He had now troublesome sons of his own to deal with, and a fresh generation of evil counsellors had arisen to encourage him in contemptible yet pernicious attacks on the welfare of the people he was set to rule over. The king's party had reshaped itself, and there was a Prince of Wales's party to add to the complications. The American colonists had asserted and had secured their independence ; our Indian empire had been established by processes needing a special code of ethics to excuse them, and initiating responsibilities of which the burden still weighs upon us ; and the French, casting off their king and the debased feudal institutions of which he was the figure-head, had begun to set Europe in a flame from which more than sparks fell upon England. All these things, and many more, caused no little disturbance in the domestic concerns of the people. William Pitt, the shrewdest though not the wisest statesman of the day, as superior to Fox as he was inferior to Burke, tried first to quell the discontent by scheming for parliamentary reform, then tided over present difficulties by wonderful schemes of financial reform, and had commenced to finish his career by plunging the country into the most iniquitous, the most stupendous, and the most injurious of all the foreign wars it has ever been engaged in.

Were such things happening in these later times, there would be no limit to the vehemence of newspaper criticism on the proceedings. As it was, there was much of that ; but newspapers, though far more numerous and formidable than they had hitherto been, were as yet only beginning to be powerful, and for the prosecutions directed against them there were larger

counterparts in the prosecutions against the public agitators and political associations that then did much of the work that the press has since assumed to itself. In the Wilkite controversy with parliament and the court the newspapers merely took a comparatively trivial part, important though that was in itself; and the newspapers had next to nothing to do with other contemporary agitations, such as the Spitalfields silk-weavers' riots in 1765. The Bill of Rights Societies, the Constitutional Societies, the Protestant Associations, and so forth, that held their meetings and issued their manifestoes in succeeding years, were reckoned more dangerous and were more severely treated than the newspapers, and such incidents as occurred in the Lord George Gordon riots of 1780 certainly gave cause for alarm. These and kindred movements grew in spite of and in consequence of the attempts made to repress them, and the press profited in the long run by many measures in which, though they were not specially aimed at it, it was involved, and through which it endured many hardships at the time.

In May 1792, while the Libel Bill was being passed through the House of Lords, the government issued a proclamation against wicked and seditious writings, which provoked the scorn of Fox, Charles Grey—who afterwards, as Earl Grey, had the credit of passing the Reform Bill of 1832—and others, but which was enthusiastically approved by the parliamentary majority. It was partly if not expressly aimed against Thomas Paine and his 'Rights of Man,' and Erskine was not able to save Paine from an adverse verdict when he was brought up for trial under the new Libel Act in the following December. The Revolution Society, the Society for Constitutional Information, the London Corresponding Society, and other organisations, were

attacked in turn or together, and in 1793 the government got, among others, John Frost put in the pillory and imprisoned, and Winterbotham, Briellat, and Hudson fined and imprisoned, all for talking sedition ; while in Scotland yet heavier sentences were passed on Muir, Fyshe Palmer, and Skirving. Other and worse cases followed, and the newspapers, though they gave but little support to the extreme views of the republican party that under French influence was growing up, were sufficiently interfered with. Lord Eldon boasted in the House of Peers in 1795, that 'there had been more prosecutions for libel within the last two years than there had been for twenty years before.' These, however, with the exception of a few to be mentioned hereafter, need not be particularised.

It was with a view of keeping down the press, as well as of increasing the revenue, that Pitt had in 1789 raised the newspaper stamp duty to twopence, also augmenting by sixpence the advertisement tax, which now amounted to half-a-crown, and he adopted other restraining measures. 'Whereas an usage prevails amongst the hawkers of newspapers and other persons, instead of selling the newspapers, to let out the same for small sums to be read by different persons, whereby the sale of newspapers is greatly obstructed,' it was enacted that any one so offending should be liable to a penalty of 5*l.* for each offence.¹ Other laws were passed requiring heavy securities from newspaper printers, defining the limits of size allowed for each stamp, and so forth ; and in 1797 the stamp duty was raised to threepence, with a discount of sixteen per cent. on sums amounting to 10*l.* 'for every newspaper not sold at more than sixpence,' that being offered as 'a reason-

¹ Act 29 George III., c. 50. A stationer in Bond Street was so fined on July 2, 1790. Knight Hunt, vol. i. p. 281.

able compensation to such publishers of newspapers who shall not advance the price of their papers beyond the amount of duty imposed thereon by this Act.' Publishers were also required under a penalty of 20*l.* to print on the newspapers the price charged for them, and not to sell them at any higher price.¹ More important was a law passed in 1798 'for preventing the mischiefs arising from the printing and publishing newspapers and papers of a like nature by persons not known, and for regulating the printing and publication of such papers in other respects,' which prescribed the registration of the names and abodes of all newspaper proprietors, printers and publishers, with description of their printing-houses and the titles of their journals, and which laid down heavy penalties for some newly made offences—among others the sending abroad of newspapers to any country 'not in amity with his majesty,' and the copying from foreign papers of matters tending to excite hatred and contempt of the person of his majesty, and of the constitution and government established in these kingdoms.² In 1804, moreover, the newspaper duty was raised to threepence-halfpenny, and the advertisement tax to three shillings and sixpence.³

Pitt's tampering with newspapers was not confined to regulating their price and modes of distribution. He knew as well as any before or after him how to influence all editors who could be coaxed or threatened, and, as there was a good deal of independence now in the better sort of London journalists, he addressed himself all the more zealously to the country people. At the close of the eighteenth century there was no daily paper published in the provinces, and the weekly journals were, as a

¹ Act 37 George III. c. 90.

² Act 38 George III. c. 78.

³ Act 44 George III. c. 98.

rule, not ambitious. 'Their comments,' we are told, 'were confined to the events of their own town or district, so sparingly administered, with such obvious distrust of their own abilities and with such cautious timidity, that they were absolutely of no account. The London papers, a pot of paste and a pair of scissors, supplied all the materials for the miscellaneous articles, and the local intelligence was detailed in the most meagre formularies. The provincial journalist of that day was, in fact, not much above a mechanic, a mere printer, and intellect had as little as possible to do with the matter. When Mr. Pitt began to find a constant instrument for the inoculation of his views indispensable to bear along with him the force and currency of popular sentiment, a public officer was instructed to open a communication with the proprietors of journals of large circulation, and the result was that to a vast majority of them two or three London papers were sent gratuitously, certain articles of which were marked with red ink, and the return made was the insertion of as many of these as the space of the paper would allow. Thus was the whole country agitated and directed by one mind as it were; and this fact accounts in no small degree for the origin, propagation, and support of that public opinion which enabled the minister to pursue his plans with so much certainty of insuring general approbation.' 'The clergy at this time,' it is added, 'were, it would appear, the principal provincial paper agents in this arrangement, and exercised so much influence that a few years afterwards some of them made their exertions the ground for a claim on clerical patronage, and in more than one case obtained it from the government.'¹

Pitt's manipulation of the country newspapers, however, was only serviceable for a time. 'The success of

¹ *New Monthly Magazine*, vol. xlviii. p. 133.

these efforts on the part of the ministers,' according to the same informant, 'roused the opposition into action, and Jacobin or republican papers, as they were then called, were established, and by their original articles materially improved the character of provincial journalism.' There was like or yet more marked improvement in metropolitan journalism in the years before and after the close of the eighteenth century, in no small measure due to the zealous action of the government in using all the power that the Libel Act of 1792 afforded it for attacking obnoxious newspapers, and in perverting, as far as it could, all the benefits it was designed to confer on the public.

Erskine was but one and the ablest of the many advocates of free speech and free writing whom these times produced. Another was Sheridan, who was a leading member of the Society of Friends of the People from the time of its starting in 1792. 'Give me but the liberty of the press,' Sheridan said in one of his vigorous speeches, delivered in parliament in 1810, 'and I will give the minister a venal House of Peers, I will give him a corrupt and servile House of Commons, I will give him the full swing of the patronage of office, I will give him the whole host of ministerial influence, I will give him all the power that place can confer upon him to purchase submission and overawe resistance, and yet, armed with the liberty of the press, I will go forth to meet him undismayed, I will attack the mighty fabric he has reared with that mightier engine, I will shake down from its height corruption, and lay it beneath the ruins of the abuses it was meant to shelter.'¹

¹ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates* (First Series), vol. xv. p. 341.

CHAPTER IX.

IN JAMES PERRY'S TIME.

1779—1811.

THOUGH there had been newspapers in England for more than a hundred and fifty years before, some of them very ably conducted and having considerable influence, they only began to assume their modern shape near the end of the eighteenth century, the shape being even then and for some time afterwards very different from what it is now. A four-paged sheet, containing less than is at present given in two pages of 'The Times,' was as much as the law allowed to be issued with a single stamp, and as much as the most enterprising editor could contrive to fill with interesting matter, even though half the space might be taken up with advertisements. Within this narrow compass, however, there was room for a lively competition, and it was vigorously carried on with the help of such writers as Sheridan and Mackintosh, Coleridge and Lamb, Southey and Moore, Campbell the poet and Campbell the lawyer, and under editors and managers as memorable as James Perry, John Walter, and Daniel Stuart.

James Perry, though not the oldest, was the most important of these three. He was born October 30, 1756, in Aberdeen, where his father, known as Pirie, was a carpenter and builder. The boy had a good

schooling, and was intended for the law, but he preferred play-acting, and, joining a strolling company of which Thomas Holcroft was a member, had about a year's experience before he was dismissed on the ground that his Scotch accent rendered it impossible for him to make his way on the stage. That was in 1774, and after vainly seeking employment in Edinburgh he travelled to Manchester, where he was for two years a clerk to a cotton-spinner, and made diligent use of his evenings in reading solid books and practising oratory in a debating society. In 1777, when he was barely one-and-twenty, he came to London, resolved to improve his position, and he soon found that he had taken a wise step. He had brought a letter of introduction to Richardson and Urquhart, the booksellers, who promised to find some work for him, and after two or three unsuccessful visits to their shop, he called one day to find Urquhart reading with much satisfaction 'The General Advertiser,' the youngest of the daily papers, which had been started in 1776 under the editorship of William Cooke. 'I have heard of nothing to suit you,' said Urquhart, 'but if you could write such articles as this that I am reading, I could give you work at once.' Young Perry was able to say that the article was his own, being one of several which he had amused himself in writing, and had dropped anonymously into the editor's box, and he produced from his pocket another article which he was about to dispose of in the same way. 'That's the very thing,' said the bookseller; 'I am one of the principal proprietors of this paper, and we want just such a writer as you. We have a meeting to-night, and I shall propose you.' Next day Perry heard to his great delight that he was to be employed on the staff of 'The General Advertiser' at a salary of a guinea a week, with half-a-guinea a week more for assisting on 'The London

Evening Post.' 'Such was the incident,' says the chronicler, 'that threw Perry into the profession of a journalist.'¹

'The London Evening Post' was one of the old-fashioned afternoon papers, appearing on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, which had survived from the time of George II. John Almon, the sturdy Wilkite, had been for a long time connected with it, and he and other writers had often got it into trouble with the Tory government. Its style was now somewhat out of date, however, and neither it nor 'The General Advertiser' was able to make much way, in spite of the assistance that Perry gave to them for his guinea-and-a-half a week. Among the daily papers 'The Public Advertiser,' with its general news and its racy letters of the Junius sort, under Henry Sampson Woodfall, 'The Morning Chronicle,' in which William Woodfall continued to distance all rivals by his parliamentary reporting and dramatic criticism, and 'The Morning Post,' in which Bate was now supporting the Tories and pouring out his scurrilities, seemed to leave little room for a new competitor, especially as both 'The Public Ledger' and 'The Gazetteer' satisfied a good many readers who cared more for advertisements than for news.

At one time, indeed, Perry very nearly made 'The General Advertiser' prosperous. During the first six weeks of 1779, while Admirals Keppel and Palliser were being tried by court-martial on account of the quarrel that had arisen between them as a discreditable sequel to their clumsy fighting with the French off Ushant in the previous July, Perry was lodging at

¹ *European Magazine*, September 1818, p. 188—an article either written or inspired by Perry himself; also *Monthly Magazine*, January 1822, pp. 566, 567.

Portsmouth, and sent up each day an eight-column report of the proceedings, and as no other paper thus lavishly provided the public with the news which was intensely interesting to it, the circulation of 'The General Advertiser' rose to 'several thousands a day.' But this success was only temporary, and though doubtless Perry did ample work for his pay, the pay was hardly enough to make him very zealous. He was as fond of speaking as of writing, and, his Scottish accent having been toned down, had some reputation as an orator. He was a persistent attendant at the Westminster Forum, at the Lyceum, which had been lately 'fitted up for a superior style of oratory, with the view of enabling such young gentlemen as were designed for the senate and the bar to practise public speaking before a genteel auditory,' and at other places of the kind; and it is recorded that 'afterwards, when Mr. Pitt came to be chancellor of the exchequer'—that is, in 1782—'having had frequent opportunities of witnessing Perry's talent in public speaking, and particularly in reply, he caused a proposal to be made to him of coming into parliament, which would have probably led on to high fortune.'¹

He was fortunate enough before long as a journalist. In 1782 he projected, and he edited for the first year, 'The European Magazine.' He was also responsible during some years for Debrett's 'Parliamentary Debates,' and in 1783 he left 'The General Advertiser' to become editor of 'The Gazetteer,' at a salary of four guineas a week. He took that post 'on the express condition that he was to be left to the free exercise of his political opinions, which were those asserted by Mr. Fox.'² 'The Gazetteer' had always been Whiggish,

¹ *European Magazine*, September 1818, p. 189.

² *Ibid.*, p. 190.

or almost too revolutionary for the Whigs, but, for a long time before Perry took charge of it, it had not been of much political account. For some time Sir Robert Walpole's chief instrument for influencing or controlling public opinion through the press, it had come to be known as 'the booksellers' paper,' held and worked by the publishing fraternity, pretty much as at a later date 'The Morning Advertiser' was held and worked by the licensed victuallers. It was a convenient channel for trade advertisements, and furnished a fair amount of general news, but made no pretence of authority in politics. Perry, however, used his position on it to effect an important reform in at least one department of journalism. Till then, the only newspaper that furnished lengthy parliamentary reports was 'The Morning Chronicle,' in which, ever since 1769, William Woodfall, himself attending the debates and charging his wonderful memory with what he heard, had given his version of everything important that had taken place, sometimes filling the whole paper with it, to the exclusion even of advertisements. But with all his skill Woodfall could not, when a long and momentous debate had lasted for several hours, get his report, of perhaps ten columns or more, written out and set in type in time for publication in the morning, and occasionally it happened that readers anxious to know at breakfast-time what had occurred overnight in the House of Commons had to wait till supper-time for the information. Those who cared for such news put up with the inconvenience so long as it could not be helped, and much preferred this arrangement to the plan followed by the other papers of either giving no more than a bald summary or postponing the report, even in that case meagre, till the following day, and 'The Morning Chronicle' maintained its popularity and

steadily increased it during several years. Perry undertook to break down the monopoly by the bold yet simple expedient of employing a staff of reporters instead of assigning the whole of the labour to one man. This was a harder task than might be supposed, however, for it not only added greatly to the expense of production, but also necessitated much scheming to obtain admission for so many reporters to the parliamentary galleries, both houses being still jealous of their privilege of privacy, and offering no such facilities for reporting as now exist. Perry's reform had to be introduced by degrees, and, though 'The Gazetteer' profited much by the changes he made, it was by no means the most suitable paper for them, and the reform was not perfected till Perry had again shifted his quarters.

In the meanwhile two other new daily papers were started. The earlier of them, 'The Morning Herald and Daily Advertiser,' does not call for much notice. Commenced on November 1, 1780, by Henry Bate, who had now added Dudley to his name, and in consequence of his secession or expulsion from 'The Morning Post,' the new paper was hardly better, in some respects worse, than the old one. According to the announcement in the first number, it was meant 'to be conducted upon Liberal principles.' 'If "The Morning Herald" does not owe its general complexion to those principles,' wrote Bate Dudley, 'it cannot be entitled to public support. The editor flatters himself it will appear early in the course of his arduous undertaking that he has been attentive to every arrangement whence his readers could derive information or entertainment. His power not being equal to the suppression of obscene trash and low invective, he trusts such articles will never stray from their natural channel to defile a single column of

"The Morning Herald." To whatever system of politics he may individually be inclined, no prejudices arising from thence shall induce him to sacrifice at any time the sensible and dispassionate correspondence of either party.' Containing a good deal of 'low invective,' if not of 'obscene trash,' 'The Herald' was run on similar lines to 'The Post,' except that a bitter rivalry was kept up between them, and that while 'The Post' now became more of a Tory organ than before, 'The Herald' supported the Prince of Wales's party, with which the aristocratic and place-hunting Whigs were more in sympathy than the Tories. Bate Dudley was just the sort of man to be a personal favourite of the scheming and dissolute prince, and he had a zealous ally in Sheridan, who wrote much for 'The Herald,' and got credit for more than he wrote. Every smart joke or stinging paragraph that Bate Dudley published, though he was himself an adept in concocting such, was fathered upon Sheridan, and on that account was credited with all the authority that could attach to anything coming from the Carlton House circle.¹

The other newspaper, especially notable as the forerunner of 'The Times,' but interesting on its own account, was 'The Daily Universal Register,' the first number of which appeared on January 1, 1785, and which at once attracted general notice, though in the way of ridicule prompted by jealousy rather than of praise, and though all through its three years' life it was an unprofitable speculation.

Its proprietor was John Walter, who, born in 1739, had learnt the trade of bookselling and publishing as apprentice to Robert Dodsley, and who carried on a business of the same sort on his own account at Charing

¹ John Bee, *Life of Foote*.

Cross during forty years.¹ Before those forty years were over, in 1783, or earlier, he began another business in Printing House Square for the development of a new printing process, known as logography, of which he was patentee and 'part contriver,' the chief inventor being Henry Johnson, a compositor employed by him.² The process consisted in the use of metal castings of complete words instead of separate letters, which its devisers believed would save time and trouble, and insure greater accuracy as well as economy. It did not answer Walter's expectations. He attributed the blame, however, to others and not to himself. 'Embarked in a business, into which I entered as a mere novice, consisting of several departments,' he said, 'want of experience laid me open to many and gross impositions, and I have been severely injured by the inattention, neglect, and ignorance of others.' He admitted that numerous errors crept into the sheets issued by him, 'but these errors,' he said, 'were not owing to any defect in the art of printing logographically, but to the readers and editors whose duty it was to correct the proof sheets.' He acknowledged, however, that the necessity of crowding his founts with vast numbers of words that were rarely used, and of keeping a sufficient store of those most in demand, was embarrassing, and with much regret he at length modified and ultimately abandoned the scheme.³ But during nearly a year and a half 'The Universal Register,' along with several books and pamphlets, was

¹ Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. vi. p. 443.

² *An Introduction to Logography*, by Henry Johnson (1783). Walter had also before this time been an enterprising under-writer at Lloyd's, and a great speculator in the coal trade. (See *The Case of Mr. John Walter*, in the British Museum Library, No. 1418, κ, 33.) He was also director of the Westminster branch of the Phoenix Fire Office for eighteen years. (Nichols, vol. vi. p. 443.)

³ *Daily Universal Register*, August 10, 11, and 12, 1786.

‘printed logographically,’ and the modified form of logography was followed for some time longer.

The first number of the new paper opened with a statement of plans and objects, which, though more than usually pretentious, gave some interesting information. ‘It is very far from my intention,’ wrote Walter in a signed article, ‘to detract from the acknowledged merit of the daily papers now in existence. It is sufficient that they please the class of readers whose approbation their conductors are ambitious to deserve. Nevertheless it is certain some of the best, some of the most respectable, and some of the most useful members of the community have frequently complained (and the causes of their complaints still exist) that by radical defects in the plans of the present established papers they were deprived of many advantages which ought naturally to result from daily publications. Of these some build their fame on the length and accuracy of parliamentary reports, which undoubtedly are given with great ability and with a laudable zeal to please those who can spare time to read ten or twelve columns of debates. Others are principally attentive to the politics of the day, and make it their study to give satisfaction to the numerous class of politicians who, blessed with easy circumstances, have nothing better to do than to amuse themselves with watching the motions of ministers both at home and abroad, and endeavouring to find out the secret springs that set in motion the great machine of government in every state and empire in the world. There is one paper which in no degree interferes with the pursuits of its contemporaries; it looks upon parliamentary debates as sacred mysteries that cannot be submitted to vulgar eyes without profanation. Political investigations it apprehends to be little short of treason, and therefore loyally abstains

from them. It deals almost solely in advertisements, and consequently, though a very useful, it is by no means an entertaining paper. Thus it would seem that every newspaper published in London is calculated for a particular set of readers only ; so that, if each set were to change its favourite publication for another, the commutation would produce disgust and dissatisfaction to all. The politician would then find nothing to amuse him but long accounts of petty squabbles about trifles in parliament, or panegyrics on the men and measures that he most disliked, or libels on those whom he most revered. The person to whom parliamentary debates afford unspeakable delight would find himself bored with political speculations about the measures that the different courts in Europe might probably adopt, or disgusted with whole pages of advertisements in which he felt no concern ; whilst the plain shop-keeper who wanted to find a convenient house for his business, and the servant who purchased his paper in hopes of seeing in it an advertisement directing where he might find a place to suit him, would have their labour for their pains in perusing publications filled with senatorial debates, or political essays and remarks which would direct them to nothing less than the house or place they wanted. A newspaper, conducted on the true and natural principles of such a publication, ought to be the Register of the Times, and faithful recorder of every species of intelligence. It ought not to be engrossed by any particular object, but, like a well-covered table, it should contain something suited to every palate.'

Such a perfect paper Walter proposed to supply, selling it for twopence-halfpenny instead of the threepence charged for most of the other dailies, and promising that it should be published punctually at six

o'clock every morning, and also that all advertisements sent to him should invariably appear on the day after they had been given in, even if, to find room for them, it was found necessary to issue an extra half-sheet. He intended the new journal, however, to be much more than an advertising medium. His ambition was to make it a complete chronicle of accurate and interesting news, and a safe guide of public opinion. "‘The Register,’ in its politics," he said, "will be of no party. Weakened as the country is by a long and expensive war, and rent by intestine divisions, nothing but the union of all parties can save it from destruction. Moderate men, therefore, I trust, will countenance a paper which has for one of its objects to cool the animosities, stifle the resentments, manage the personal honour and reconcile the principals of contending parties, while the favours of those will be courted who support principles by fair argument and think that a good cause may be injured by personalities and low invective. The correspondence of such as descend to illiberal abuse, and attack the man rather than the measure, will always be disregarded. "The Register," instead of dealing in scurrilities and abusing the great men in power or the great men out of power, or instead of deifying the one or the other, will reserve to itself a right of censuring or applauding either as their conduct may occasionally appear proper or improper. Nothing," it was added, "shall ever find a place in "The Universal Register" that can tend to wound the ear of delicacy or corrupt the heart. Vice shall never be suffered therein to wear the garb of virtue. To hold out the former in alluring colours would strike at the very root of morality, and concealing the native deformity of vice might seduce unsuspecting innocence from the paths of virtue.'

Starting thus ambitiously, and giving ample evidence of zeal and honesty, if with too much arrogance, Walter's paper fared ill under its original title, and, attributing its disasters in part to the title, he at length changed it. "The Universal Register," he said in his amusingly pompous way, 'has been a name as injurious to the logographic newspaper as Tristram was to Mr. Shandy's son. But old Shandy forgot he might have rectified by confirmation the mistake of the parson at baptism—with the touch of a bishop have turned Tristram to Trismegistus. "The Universal Register," from the day of its first appearance to the day of its confirmation, has, like Tristram, suffered from unusual casualties, both laughable and serious, arising from its name, which, on its introduction, was immediately curtailed of its fair proportion by all who called for it, the word "Universal" being universally omitted, and the word "Register" being only retained. "Boy, bring me 'The Register!'" The waiter answers, "Sir, we have not a library, but you may see it at the New Exchange coffee-house." "Then I'll see it there," answers the disappointed politician, and he goes to the New Exchange and calls for "The Register," upon which the waiter tells him he cannot have it as he is not a subscriber, and presents him with "The Court and City Register," the old "Annual Register," or the "New Annual Register," or, if the coffee-house be within the purlieu of Covent Garden or the hundred of Drury, slips into the politician's hand "Harris's Register for Ladies." For these and other reasons the parents of the "Universal Register" have added to its original name that of "The Times," which, being a monosyllable, bids defiance to corruptors and mutilators of the language.'

These sentences are from the long announcement

that appeared in the first number of 'The Times and Daily Universal Register,' on January 1, 1788, and Walter promised, along with much else, that in the re-named paper greater pains than ever should be taken to give prompt and accurate information under separate heads—the literary, political, commercial, philosophical, critical, theatrical, fashionable, humorous, witty, &c., each of which are supplied with a competent share of intellects for the pursuit of their several functions, an endowment which is not in all times to be found even in the heads of the state, the heads of the church, the heads of the law, the heads of the navy, the heads of the army, and, though last not least, the great heads of the universities.' 'The political head of "The Times," it was added, 'like that of Janus, the Roman deity, is double-faced; with one countenance it will smile continually on the friends of Old England, and with the other will frown incessantly on her enemies.' For the change of title Walter claimed that he had contemporary warrant. 'The alteration we have made in our head is not without precedents,' he said. "'The World'" has parted with half its *caput mortuum*, and a moiety of its brains. "The Herald" has cut off half its head, and has lost its original humour. "The Post," it is true, retains its whole head, and its old features, and as to the other public prints they appear as having neither heads nor tails.'

'The World' there scornfully referred to had been started just a year before, and, in no way remarkable, was never very successful during its short lifetime, though in the number that was published on the same day as the first 'Times' it boasted that in the course of the previous twelve months its circulation had risen from two thousand to between three and four thousand, and, in consequence, bespoke the forbearance of its

readers on account of the lateness of publication inevitable when so large a quantity had to be printed off. Probably if the truth were told, the sale of 'The World' was at no time above a few hundred a day. A couple of thousand was, in those times, a good paying circulation which very few papers achieved.

'The Times,' in its early years, professed, as it has often done since, to take no party side, but to be an independent and outspoken critic of all parties, while giving a general support to the government of the day, which for a long time, whether Pitt was in office or not, stoutly upheld the Tory principles of which he was the champion, but which differed in some important particulars from the Toryism of the court. The court Toryism was coarsely represented by 'The Morning Post,' and the principal Whig organ was 'The Morning Chronicle.'

'The Morning Chronicle,' however, had been losing ground under William Woodfall's now old-fashioned management, and suffered especially from the opposition offered to it by Perry in 'The Gazetteer.' In 1789 a notable change was brought about. Woodfall, quarrelling with his co-proprietors, who wanted to compete with Perry by following his tactics, left the paper after twenty years' work on it, and started 'The Diary,' which only had a short and unhappy life; and 'The Chronicle' was offered for sale. Perry borrowed 500*l.* from Ransome & Co., the bankers, and some more money from Bellamy, the wine merchant in Chandos Street, who was also caterer and doorkeeper to the House of Commons, and entered into partnership with a Charterhouse schoolmaster named Gray, who had just received a legacy of 500*l.* With that joint capital the two bought 'The Chronicle,' partly at Fox's instigation, the Duke of Norfolk making Perry a present of a house

in the Strand, which he converted into a new publishing office.¹ Thus revived, 'The Chronicle' soon became the most influential paper of that generation.

Perry was the first of the great line of modern London editors, among whom—Stuart, of 'The Morning Post,' soon becoming his rival—Black, of 'The Morning Chronicle,' and Barnes and Delane, of 'The Times,' were after his day especially famous. He had all the qualifications for success. 'Perhaps no man connected with the English press,' it was said shortly after his death, 'ever enjoyed a tithe of the personal popularity of Perry. He was in the first place a highly honourable and brave man. Confidence reposed in him was never abused. He was the depositary of many most important secrets of high personages. Generous in the extreme, he was ever ready with his purse and his services. His manner was manly, frank, and cordial; and he was the best of proprietors. He was hospitable, too; and it was said that his dinners were positively the best of any at that time in the town. Though not profound, he was quick, versatile, and showy. He wrote like a man of the world, and took plain, common-sense views of the subjects on which he treated; and his style was easy and familiar.'² Other contemporary report is to the same effect. 'He was a man of strong natural sense, some cynical knowledge, and quick tact,' said one of his friends; 'prudent, plausible, and with great heartiness and warmth of feeling. This last quality was perhaps of more use to him than any other in the sphere in which he moved. His cordial voice and sanguine mode of address made friends, whom his sincerity and gratitude ensured.' The same informant admits that he was

¹ *Monthly Magazine*, January 1822, p. 567; Cyrus Redding, *Fifty Years' Recollections*, vol. i. p. 95.

² Quoted by Knight Hunt in *The Fourth Estate*, vol. ii. p. 106.

'a little of a coxcomb,' and 'fond of the society of lords,' being 'more vain than proud.' He sometimes affected more scholarship than he possessed. After the death of Porson, who was his brother-in-law, in 1808, Perry, writing about him in 'The Chronicle,' stated that 'epithalamia were thrown into his coffin,' and, on its being pointed out to him that this was not likely to have happened, he inserted as an erratum next day, 'For "epithalamia" read "epicedia."' He was blamed for writing too much in his own paper, and for having 'an ambition to have it thought that every good thing in it, unless it came from a lord or an acknowledged wit, was his own; if he paid for the article itself, he thought that he paid for the credit of it also.'¹

Perry was on good terms with his contributors, however, and made 'The Morning Chronicle' a more prosperous journal than had ever before been known in England. During the first few years he and his partner Gray did most of the original writing, which, apart from letters and other contributions from outsiders, rarely exceeded two or three columns each day, though this was a larger quantity than most of the other papers contained. Gray provided the heavy articles, Perry those of lighter sort; and after Gray's death, which happened after he had been part proprietor for only a few years, other writers were employed, among them James Mackintosh and Sheridan, and in later times Thomas Campbell and Thomas Moore, who contributed verse, and John Campbell, then a young barrister, who was the theatrical critic.² 'The Exile of Erin,' 'Ye Mariners of England,' and several other poems appeared in 'The Chronicle' during 1800, on Christmas Day in which year Thomas Campbell wrote to his agent in

¹ *Edinburgh Review*, May 1823, pp. 361, 362.

² *Monthly Magazine*, January 1822: Cyrus Redding, vol. i. p. 95.

London : 'I have just finished my fourteenth transmission to P. I have resolved to send but twenty for a year's allowance. I think you may demand at least forty guineas for them all. The remaining six shall be sent within three weeks. Two guineas apiece is no extraordinary demand ; but leave it to himself. More than twenty pieces in a year would make my name too hackneyed.'¹ When Campbell settled in London he attempted to write prose as well as verse for 'The Chronicle,' but with less success. 'Experience must have been wanting,' said one of his friends and fellow-contributors. 'A knowledge of the political topics of the time, and the art of rapid composition, these essentials in writing for the masses, were not the qualities with which Campbell was endowed. He must have been an utter stranger to the tact which, in the newspaper contests of that time, when politics ran high, must have been more than ever demanded. He had none of that positive acquaintance with men and things connected with political affairs which can be obtained at the seat of government alone. The poet was unsuccessful, though Perry retained him for some time to aid in getting up the poet's corner of the paper.'² Perry had another and a more famous contributor. In September 1793, when Coleridge, at the age of nineteen, ran up from Cambridge to London, and was on the point of enlisting as a soldier, he made his first appearance as a newspaper writer. 'He sent a poem of a few lines to Perry, soliciting a loan of a guinea for a distressed author,' we are told. 'Perry, who was generous with his money, sent it ; and Coleridge often mentioned this, when "The Morning Chronicle" was alluded to, with expressions of a deep gratitude proportioned to the severe

¹ Beattie, *Life and Correspondence of Thomas Campbell*, vol. i. p. 329.

² Cyrus Redding in *New Monthly Magazine*, vol. lxxvii. p. 404.

distress which that small sum at the moment relieved.' ¹ In later years Coleridge wrote some other poems for 'The Morning Chronicle,' and his friend Charles Lamb was an occasional writer of prose for it. ²

Perry owed much to his contributors, but more to his own tact and enterprise. One of his purposes in acquiring 'The Chronicle' was to bring to as much perfection as he could the system of parliamentary reporting on which his heart was set, and for which he had already won much credit. In this he got other help, besides a loan of money, from Bellamy the wine merchant. Bellamy being also doorkeeper of the House of Commons, he could let almost anyone he chose pass in and out of the building, and send messages and parcels to and fro with ease. He was thus of immense service to Perry in enabling his reporters to make and despatch their notes of debates without unnecessary trouble or loss of time. ³ And Perry's zeal was shown in another way. Before the war between England and France was begun in 1793, he went to France and stayed there more than a year in order that he might send home early and correct accounts of the progress of the great revolution. ⁴ He was thus one of the pioneers of the special war correspondence which has been such an important feature of modern journalism.

No stronger proof of the skill with which Perry managed 'The Morning Chronicle' could, apart from its commercial success, be found than in the fact that at a time when nearly every other newspaper was the frequent object of libel prosecutions by the crown, this outspoken organ of the Whigs in opposition was scarcely

¹ Daniel Stuart in *Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1838, p. 124.

² *Essays of Elia*, 'Newspapers Thirty Years Ago.'

³ *Monthly Magazine*, January 1822, p. 567.

⁴ Knight Hunt, vol. ii. p. 104.

interfered with. Thrice only during his long career was Perry brought up for trial. In the first case he was defended by Erskine; in the second and third he defended himself; and in all these cases verdicts of not guilty were obtained.¹ He was less fortunate in 1798. 'The Morning Chronicle' of March 19 in that year contained a paragraph in which some discerned sympathy with the French, with whom England was then at war. On the 21st the Earl of Minto called attention to it in the House of Peers, and he was followed by Lord Sydney, who spoke of 'The Chronicle' as 'a scandalous paper, which he would not admit into his home.' Perry was not without defenders. Lord Derby maintained that he had 'never employed his pen or his paper to undermine the civil or religious establishments of the country,' and that 'The Chronicle' was 'distinguished for its regard to the decencies of private life, and for its disdain of all scandal on individuals, and of those licentious personalities by which the peace of families was destroyed'; and the Duke of Bedford, the Marquis of Lansdowne, and the Duke of Norfolk spoke to the same effect. Lord Minto's motion that Perry, and with him Lambert, the printer of 'The Chronicle,' should be imprisoned for three months and fined 50*l.*, was, however, carried by sixty-nine votes to eleven.²

John Walter, though he generally supported the government, while Perry opposed it, was much more unfortunate. 'The Times' was less than two years old, when, in the autumn of 1789, a paragraph censuring the Duke of York appeared in it. For this Walter was prosecuted in December, sentenced to pay a fine of 50*l.*, to stand in the pillory for an hour, to be imprisoned for a year, and after that to give security for his good be-

¹ Knight Hunt, vol. ii. pp. 37, 105.

² *Parliamentary History*, vol. xxxiii.

haviour during seven years. He was excused from the pillory, but while he was in Newgate gaol, and managing 'The Times' as best he could from there, two other libels appeared, one blaming the Prince of Wales, and again the Duke of York, and the other charging the Duke of Clarence with having absented himself from his ship without leave of the authorities; and for these fresh offences Walter was in November sentenced to another year's imprisonment, and to pay fines amounting to 200*l*.¹ He had friends at court, however, and, apparently at the intercession of Sir Thomas Erskine, he was released in March 1791, after he had been in confinement for sixteen months.²

Walter boldly vied with Perry in newspaper enterprise, one of his arrangements being to keep a light cutter running backwards and forwards across the

¹ Knight Hunt, vol. ii. p. 164.

² 'Little did I ever expect ever to be an inhabitant of this vile receptacle, or that any political sin could doom me to so severe a sentence,' Walter wrote to James Bland Burges from Newgate in February 1790. 'I am the more astonished when I daily read in the opposition prints the most opprobrious libels and treasonable paragraphs against those who gave birth to my prosecutors, and yet without notice. . . . Newgate was undoubtedly a receptacle for felons, though it is the fashion of the court, at present, to extend it to misdemeanours, by which means we are subject to more solitary confinement than felons who are guilty of murder and the greatest outcasts of society. Though I am confined in what is called the state side and, by paying for a room, have one to myself, yet the same entrance leads likewise to the felons, and whenever any are brought into the gaol the outward door is shut, and they are fettered in the common passage, so that it discourages my friends from access; and such is the audacity of some of the turnkeys that they will frequently keep them and those who bring my provisions for an hour at the door, even when they are lolling in their chair in an adjoining room; and what is still worse, at eight o'clock I am locked up every evening in common with the felons, after which time no soul is permitted to have a person with him. . . . Were a person ever so ill, they might call their hearts out before any assistance could be procured. Judge then what a man must feel who has till lately enjoyed even the luxuries of life.'—*Bland-Burges Papers*, p. 157. In this letter Walter says, 'I was one of the jury who tried Junius's "letter to the king" twenty years since.'

Channel during the war with France, in order surreptitiously to obtain from the local fishermen copies of the French papers, which were contraband in England, and in this way to provide interesting information for his readers.¹ He raised 'The Times' to the second rank among the journals of the day; but it was reserved for his son, the second John Walter, who took charge of the paper in 1803, to make it both more influential and more prosperous than 'The Morning Chronicle.' He died on November 16, 1812. 'He was a man,' it was said of him, 'of the strictest honour, both in professional and private life, and his unbounded benevolence was only exceeded by his urbanity and uncommon flow of spirits.'²

Perry, who was his junior by seventeen years, lived on till December 6, 1821, continuing the general management of 'The Chronicle' till the last, but some years before this he had left much of the editing to others, his first assistant after Gray's death being Robert Spankie, who was afterwards attorney-general of Bengal, and the next John Black. He interested himself in much besides the newspaper, losing part of his earnings in manufacturing speculations; but he could afford to do this. 'The Chronicle,' after his death, was sold for 42,000*l*.³

Ten years younger than Perry, and his survivor by a quarter of a century, though he got out of harness sooner, was the last of the three great editors of the period. Daniel Stuart was another of the Scotchmen who sought and found fortune in London. He claimed some sort of kinship with the royal family whose name he bore, and was proud of the prowess of his ancestors, the Stuarts of Loch Rannoch in Perthshire, in fighting

¹ Cyrus Redding, vol. ii. p. 107.

² Nichols, vol. vi. p. 443.

³ Knight Hunt, vol. ii. pp. 104, 112.

against the houses of Orange and Hanover in 1715 and 1745. He was himself, however, a loyal subject of King George III., though somewhat wavering between Whig and Tory principles. He was born in Edinburgh on November 16, 1766, and in 1778 he was sent to London, where his elder brothers, Charles and Peter, were already learning the printing trade. Charles appears to have left it, while he was still a young man, for verse-writing and play-writing. His poems were in the style of Burns, 'though,' as his brother admitted, 'of much inferior merit,' and several of his short comedies or farces were produced at the theatres towards the close of the eighteenth century. But Peter set up in business as a general printer, and Daniel, as soon as his schooling was over, became his assistant or partner.¹

These two lived together, and with them lived their sister Catherine, who, we are told, was 'less remarkable for her personal attractions than for a rich fund of good sense which, under gentle and unpretending manners, was directed by a strong mind and an affectionate heart.' This young lady, whose mind and heart seem to have been very helpful to her brother, as well as to others, happened to be a great friend of a Mrs. Fraser, with whom young James Mackintosh came in 1788 to lodge, while—having taken his doctorship of medicine in Edinburgh—he studied law at Lincoln's Inn. The young people soon fell in love with one another, and in February 1789, neither being yet four-and-twenty, were secretly married, thereby giving great offence to both their families, though Daniel Stuart, at any rate, was soon, and for long afterwards, on good terms with his amiable sister and his talented brother-in-law.²

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, September 1847, p. 322.

² R. J. Mackintosh, *Life of Sir James Mackintosh*, vol. i. p. 50.

The friendship was serviceable to both of the young men, especially as Mackintosh, finding it necessary to earn money for the support of his wife, was a busy journalist for some years. His first employment was on 'The Oracle,' a daily paper which had just been started by John Bell, in the hope of competing with 'The Times' and its rivals. Mackintosh was employed to write up the foreign news for 'The Oracle,' and the first arrangement was that his work should be paid for according to the quantity. In one week, however, to Bell's horror, he produced matter enough to be worth ten guineas. 'No paper can stand this !' exclaimed Bell, and a fresh contract was made, in accordance with which Mackintosh wrote less and received a regular salary. He also, as has been noted, contributed occasional articles to 'The Morning Chronicle.'¹

In the meanwhile the Stuart brothers were drifting into newspaper speculation. Though they do not seem to have been otherwise responsible for it at this date, they undertook, in 1788, the printing of 'The Morning Post,' which, having been in very low water for some time, made a fresh start, with new type and promise of other improvements. 'Newspapers,' wrote the editor, whoever he may have been, in terms more applicable to 'The Post' than to any other journal, 'have long enough estranged themselves in a manner totally from the elegancies of literature, and dealt only in malice, or at least in the prattle of the day. On this head, however, newspapers are not much more to blame than their patrons, the public. But it is a blame out of which "The Morning Post" is resolved to struggle, and for that end plans are now settling with a number of literary gentlemen, and particularly with one whose name would do our paper the highest honour were we at liberty to an-

¹ Mackintosh, vol. i. pp. 53, 54.

nounce it. The period is not far distant when "The Morning Post" will be as necessarily sought after, not only for the purpose of learning the fashionable intelligence, and the best authenticated accounts of foreign and domestic occurrences which it now possesses, but that the lovers of literature and taste may thoroughly peruse it, and store it up for future information and many a future reading.¹ Those were vain yet prophetic words. The 'number of literary gentlemen,' and the one particularly honourable among them, were not procured by Tattersall, the proprietor at that time, who knew more about horses and sport than about the 'elegancies of literature,' and Dr. Wolcott, as Peter Pindar, continued to be the chief writer on 'The Post,' which, besides his clever verses, gave much information about affairs of the prize-ring and kindred amusements. At length, in July 1792, Tattersall had to pay 4,000*l.* damages for an especially gross libel on Lady Elizabeth Lambert,² and, though he was not ruined, 'The Post' suffered considerably. It derived a large revenue from advertisements of carriages and horses, but in 1795 its average daily circulation was only 350, and Tattersall was glad to sell it to Daniel Stuart, and some friends from whom Stuart soon afterwards bought their shares, for 600*l.*, that price including the house in Catherine Street, Strand, and all the plant, as well as the copyright.³

Daniel Stuart had been printing 'The Morning Post' during seven years before that, his brother Peter having resigned the work to him early in 1788 in order to start the first London evening paper, 'The Star.' Hitherto, throughout more than half a century, there had been several evening papers, issued thrice a week; but these

¹ *Morning Post*, January 1, 1788.

² Campbell, *Lives of the Chief Justices*, vol. iii. p. 51.

³ *Gentleman's Magazine*, July 1838, p. 24.

had depended for their success more on essays and other miscellaneous matter than on fresh and original news, and Peter Stuart only ventured on his experiment, as Daniel said, "in consequence of the increased facilities of communication by Palmer's mail-coach plan just started."¹ It being now possible for evening newspapers to be delivered on the same day, and more quickly than the post could carry them, Peter Stuart shrewdly set a fashion in which he soon had many imitators; and 'The Star' was carried on with some profit till 1831, when it was swallowed up by 'The Albion.' Its first editor was 'Mr. Macdonald, a Scotch poet, author of "Vimonda," a tragedy, an accomplished literary gentleman, with a large family, in distressed circumstances,' as we are told by Daniel, who also reports that his brother invited Burns to come up to town and supply 'communications to the paper' at a salary of a guinea a week, 'quite as large as his excise office emoluments.' 'I forget the particulars,' he adds, 'but I remember my brother showing Burns's letters, and boasting of the correspondence with so great a genius.'²

Daniel Stuart was a more skilful newspaper manager than his elder brother, and also a man of more general ability and wider interests. When in 1792 the Society of Friends of the People was started, in order to carry on an orderly agitation against the tyrannical policy of Pitt and the Tories, with Erskine, Sheridan, Grey, Whitbread, Tierney, Lauderdale, and other influential Whigs among its members, Mackintosh was its honorary secretary, and Daniel Stuart did much of the work for him.³ This brought the young printer into intimate relations with nearly all the leading members of the opposition, and, adopting their opinions in the main, he

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, July 1838, p. 24.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, September 1847, p. 323.

became, not exactly a Whig, but more liberal and cosmopolitan than any orthodox Whigs could be. Therefore, in 1795, when Mackintosh's society was dissolved, and when Daniel Stuart became proprietor and editor of 'The Morning Post,' he not only revolutionised the general tone of the paper, but, claiming to be independent of party, made it an exponent of bolder and more revolutionary views in politics than found utterance in 'The Morning Chronicle' or any of the other daily papers. His brother-in-law, Mackintosh, became one of his contributors, and among other contributors, before long, were Coleridge, Lamb, Southey, and Wordsworth. During a few years, indeed, 'The Post' had a staff of writers so brilliant and interesting that their connection with it deserves to be traced with some detail in another chapter. At present it is enough to note the fact that Daniel Stuart's skilful editing made his paper during a few years more successful than any of its rivals.

The circulation of 'The Morning Post,' which was only 350 when Stuart bought it in 1795, was over 2,000 in 1798, being partly raised to that figure by his buying up of two other daily papers, the old 'Gazetteer' and a short-lived rival, 'The Telegraph,' with a sale of about 700 between them, which he absorbed in 'The Post'; and it exceeded 4,500 in 1803, when the highest average of any other paper was only about 3,000.¹ That total was reached by 'The Morning Chronicle' alone. "The Morning Herald" and "The Times," then leading papers,' said Stuart, 'were neglected, and "The Morning Post," by vigilance and activity, rose rapidly. Advertisements flowed in beyond bounds. I encouraged the miscellaneous advertisements in the front page, preferring them to any others, upon the rule that the more numerous the customers the more independent

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, September 1847, p. 323.

and permanent the custom. Besides, numerous and various advertisements interest numerous and various readers, looking out for employment, servants, sales, purchases, &c. &c. Advertisements act and react. They attract readers and promote circulation, and circulation attracts advertisements.' ¹

Four years after he had begun to make 'The Morning Post' a profitable and powerful newspaper, Daniel Stuart entered on another successful speculation, emulating and improving upon his brother Peter's experience on 'The Star,' as a rival to which 'The Courier,' had lately been issued as an evening paper. 'The Courier,' started by John Parry, had been conducted with some spirit, and had what was for those times a respectable circulation, but Parry seems to have been ruined by a particularly outrageous libel prosecution instituted by the government in May 1799. In the previous November he had published this paragraph: 'The emperor of Russia is rendering himself obnoxious to his subjects by various acts of tyranny, and ridiculous in the eyes of Europe by his inconsistency. He has now passed an edict prohibiting the importation of timber, deal, &c. In consequence of this ill-timed law upwards of one hundred sail of vessels are likely to return to this kingdom without freights.' On the ground that this was a gross insult to a friendly power and likely to cause trouble between England and Russia, the attorney-general, afterwards Lord Eldon, persuaded the Court of King's Bench to fine Parry 100*l.* and to send him to prison for six months, both the printer and publisher being also imprisoned for a month.² Parry discreetly sold 'The Courier,' and Daniel Stuart discreetly bought it. Under his direction, though it was involved in at least

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, July 1838, p. 25.

² Lord Campbell, *Lives of the Chief Justices*, vol. iii. p. 50.

one libel case only a few months after he took charge of it, the circulation steadily advanced from 1,500 in 1796 to 7,000 in 1811, and after that to 8,000 or more, the number—unparalleled for that time—being 10,000 in the memorable fortnight before the battle of Waterloo.¹

Before that date, however, Daniel Stuart had practically retired from business. Finding that his health was breaking down under the strain of two daily papers, he sold 'The Morning Post' in 1803; and in the management of 'The Courier' he had a partner, Peter Street, who attended to the printing and publishing from the first, and who also undertook the editorship before 1811. Street was either a Tory or, as his enemies called him, 'an anythingarian,'² and in his hands 'The Courier' was during many years the chief ministerial organ in the London press, 'The Morning Chronicle' being its principal opponent.

Stuart, with some reason, prided himself not only on the very successful way in which his two papers were managed, but also on the influence he was able to exert through them on the politics of the day, and on the independence with which he did this. 'I supported Addington against Bonaparte during the peace of Amiens with all my power,' he said; 'and in the summer of 1803 Mr. Estcourt came to me with a message of thanks from the prime minister, Mr. Addington, offering me anything I wished. I declined the offer.'³ A few years afterwards he wrote an article in 'The Courier' finding fault with the Duke of York, and, as was usual, two or three early copies of the paper were sent off to the government offices. 'About four o'clock,' according to his report, 'up came an alarming

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1838, p. 490.

² *Cyrus Redding*, vol. i. p. 94.

³ *Gentleman's Magazine*, June 1838, p. 578.

message from the treasury, that, if that paragraph went forth, the ministry would be ruined. We cancelled 3,500 sheets and expunged it, and I made Street promise to accept of no pecuniary remuneration for so considerable a loss, that it might not be said we had done this to extort money. The paper at that time was supposed to be so much under ministerial direction that certain high personages would not have believed the paragraph was not sent designedly by ministers to the paper for a crooked purpose.' ¹

Here is another of Stuart's interesting anecdotes, which throw light on much besides the important position that newspapers, under such men as Stuart and Perry, were now attaining in the political world. 'Early in 1811,' he tells us, 'Coleridge had some private business with me. I called on him at Charles Lamb's chambers in the Temple, and we adjourned to a tavern, where we talked over the news of the day. There was at that time a dispute in parliament about the conditions on which the Prince of Wales should accept the regency, and it had been authoritatively, ostentatiously, gravely boasted that the royal brothers had met, and had all agreed it should be a regency without restrictions. Coleridge pointed out that this was a most unconstitutional interference, that the constitution knew nothing of an assembly of princes to overawe the legislature. I wrote an article to this effect in "The Courier," referred to the Germanic constitution, and censured the attempt to establish "a college of princes" in England. The Duke of Sussex took this up in high dudgeon, and made a long, angry speech in the House of Lords on the subject. He thought, evidently, that the article was a ministerial manifesto from the cabinet in Downing Street, without

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1838, p. 127.

knowing that it was only a tavern concoction, of which ministers knew nothing.'¹

To the spring of 1811 must also be referred yet another of Stuart's amusing reminiscences. 'At this time,' he says, 'a struggle was going on whether the regent should be a Whig or a Tory, and important letters were passing between his royal highness and Mr. Perceval. At midnight George Spurrett, the porter, who slept in "The Courier" office, was knocked up; a splendid carriage and splendid liveries at the door; a portly elegant man, elegantly dressed, wrapped up in a cloak, presented himself and inquired for Mr. Stuart, for, as I was abused in the newspapers as the conductor of "The Courier," the merit of which belonged wholly to Mr. Street, I was the person inquired for by strangers. George said Mr. Stuart lived out of town, but Mr. Street, the editor, resided on the Adelphi Terrace. A packet was delivered to George, who was enjoined to give it speedily to Mr. Street, as it was of great importance. This was a copy of the correspondence between the Prince of Wales and Mr. Perceval. To be sure of its being genuine Mr. Street went immediately to Mr. Perceval to inquire. On seeing it, Mr. Perceval started back and exclaimed, "This is done to ruin me with the prince! If it appears in 'The Courier,' nothing will persuade him I did not publish it as an appeal to the public against him. It must not be published!" "No?" said Mr. Street. "It is a very good article for the paper." Mr. Perceval explained and entreated; Mr. Street still remarking, "It is a very good article for the paper; and what will partner Stuart say if he hears of my suppressing it?" "Well," said Mr. Perceval, who held it fast, "some news shall be sent to you as an

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1838, p. 128.

equivalent.” Accordingly, a copy of the official despatch of the taking of the island of Bandy, in the East Indies, was sent the same day, and appeared in “The Courier” before it appeared in “The London Gazette.” I knew nothing of this till the evening, when I dined with Street at Kilburn, when we had a hearty laugh at these occurrences.’¹

Street was sole editor of ‘The Courier’ for about twelve years, and, we are told, ‘with Shakespeare and Burke ever ready at his finger-ends for apt quotations, conducted it with great spirit, much in the confidence of the government, and led as sumptuous and gay a life as his partner’s was the opposite—decorous and economic.’² He died a poor man not very long after his connection with Stuart had been ended, in 1822, when they had dissolved partnership and sold ‘The Courier.’ Stuart lived on till August 25, 1846, having spent nearly half of his eighty years in quiet enjoyment of the wealth he had honestly acquired, and of the respect he won from all. He was a man of varied and refined tastes, fortunate in nearly everything he took in hand. Picture-collecting was a great hobby with him, and one of his store was Wilkie’s ‘Blind Fiddler,’ which the artist had been glad to sell him for five guineas in 1806.³ Though a shrewd Scotchman, he was not ungenerous. Coleridge spoke of him in 1809 as ‘a man of the most consummate knowledge of the world, managed by a thorough, strong and sound judgment, and rendered innocuous by a good heart’; and ‘a most wise, disinterested, kind, and constant friend.’⁴ ‘He ever appeared to us one of the finest tempered of editors,’ said

¹ *Gentleman’s Magazine*, August 1838, p. 128.

² Jerdan, *Autobiography*, vol. i. p. 92.

³ *Gentleman’s Magazine*, December 1847, p. 661.

⁴ Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, vol. ii. p. 401. (Biographical Supplement.)

Charles Lamb; 'Perry, of "The Morning Chronicle," was equally pleasant, with a dash—no slight one either—of the courtier. Stuart was frank, plain, and English all over.'¹

Both in 'The Morning Post' and in 'The Courier' Stuart and his associates had done much to help on journalistic enterprise. More influential, however, because more steady and persistent in their work, were some other newspaper men, and especially the proprietors of 'The Morning Chronicle' and 'The Times'; and several of the fresh papers that were started in these years, though only a few of them were successful, had important bearings on the general progress.

About 'The Morning Chronicle' under Perry's long rule there is little to be added to what has already been said. Loyally if not slavishly supporting Fox, whether he was in or out of office, so long as he lived, and as far as possible maintaining after his death the views held by him, it was all along the accepted organ of the orthodox Whigs, opposing itself with equal zeal to Toryism on the one hand and to the new Radicalism that was springing up and shooting out somewhat unhealthily on the other. During a few years it was outstripped in popularity by 'The Morning Post,' and it had to face the formidable rivalry of 'The Times' and such rivalry from the other daily papers as, though it may not have been very formidable, was not to be despised. But Perry knew how to put good writing into his paper, and how to make a good show of general news, and to secure nearly as many advertisements as he could make room for. Satisfying his readers, he had himself ample ground for being satisfied with his achievements.

'The Times' had a more eventful history, and though the second John Walter who succeeded his father in 1803 had many years of struggling before he could raise

¹ *Essays of Elia*, 'Newspapers Thirty Years Ago.'

the paper to the pre-eminence it so long enjoyed, his struggles were interesting and serviceable. This second Walter, born in 1784, was not yet nineteen when he became, as he said, 'joint proprietor and exclusive manager' of 'The Times,' and, abandoning some of his father's crotchets, imitated all his father's enthusiasm in the business he took in hand. His policy was to make the paper a good property by methods that were not undignified, without too rigid adherence to the views of either of the political parties then contending for the management of the nation's affairs. 'On his commencing the business,' according to his own account, 'he gave his conscientious and disinterested support to the existing administration, that of Lord Sidmouth. The paper continued that support of the men in power, but without suffering them to repay its partiality by contributions calculated to produce any reduction whatsoever in the expense of managing the concern; because by such admission the editor was conscious he should have sacrificed the right of condemning any act which he might esteem detrimental to the public welfare.'¹ Lord Sidmouth, better known as Addington, was replaced by Pitt early in 1804, and as, except during the short time of Lord Grenville's administration, between February 1806 and March 1807, the Tories were in office till 1827, albeit with various shades of Toryism, Walter had no great difficulty in giving 'disinterested support to the men in power,' without much straining or variation of the 'independent spirit' for which he took credit. He did, however, show enough independence to bring on himself and his house more than one piece of persecution.

His father had been printer to the Customs since 1786, and this profitable addition to his business had

¹ *Times*, February 11, 1810.

come to be regarded as a permanency when, in 1804, Lord Melville being first lord of the admiralty, 'The Times' boldly attacked him on account of the malpractices for which, soon afterwards, he was impeached. 'The editor,' said Walter, 'knew the disposition of the man whose conduct he found himself obliged to condemn. Yet he never refrained for a moment on that account from speaking of the Catamaran expedition as it merited, or from bestowing on the practices disclosed in "the tenth report" the terms of reprobation with which they were greeted by the general sense of the country. The result was as he apprehended. Without the allegation of a single complaint, his family was deprived of the business, which had so long been discharged by it, of printing for the Customs, a business which was performed by contract, and which he will venture to say, was executed with an economy and a precision that have not since been exceeded. The government advertisements were at the same time withdrawn.'¹

More important to the community than the quarrel which ensued between the Walters and the government on that subject was another quarrel in which they were engaged. From the first the conductors of 'The Times' took great and praiseworthy pains to provide the English public with late and authentic foreign news. With that object, as has been already noted, they employed cutters of their own to obtain from the French coast newspapers containing fuller accounts of the enemy's proceedings than were allowed to appear in English official organs, and they made all the use they could of the regular packet boats. 'The editor's packages from abroad,' however, Walter complained, 'were always stopped by the government at the outports, while those for the ministerial journals were

¹ *Times*, February 11, 1810.

allowed to pass. The foreign captains were always asked by a government officer at Gravesend if they had papers for "The Times." These, when acknowledged, were as regularly stopped. The Gravesend officer, on being spoken to on the subject, replied that he would transmit to the editor his papers with the same punctuality as he did those belonging to the publishers of the journals just alluded to, but that he was not allowed.' Walter appealed to the Home Office, but the only reply he could get from the authorities was that 'he might receive his foreign papers as a favour' if he would promise to the government 'a corresponding favour in the spirit and tone of his publication.' He appealed again and again, but only to be told that, 'provided it could be known what party in politics he meant to support,' his foreign papers should be delivered to him.'¹ Declining to be thus tied in his politics, he increased his efforts to obtain news from abroad through channels that the government was not able to interfere with, and these efforts became in time so successful that he was often able to forestall the government itself in obtaining information from the seat of war. The news of the capitulation of Flushing in 1809, for instance, was published in 'The Times' twenty-four hours before any other report was received in London. It was claimed for Walter that his enterprise achieved 'the extinction of what, before his time, had been an invariable practice with the General Post Office, the systematic retardation of foreign intelligence, and the public sale of foreign news for the benefit of the Lombard Street officials.'²

¹ *Times*, February 11, 1810.

² *Ibid.*, July 29, 1847. Jerdan says that as editor of *The Sun* he sometimes paid from ten to a hundred guineas for a single French newspaper, 'if the date was recent, and it contained any fresh account of Bonaparte's German battles.' (*Autobiography*, vol. i. p. 166.) We are told by Savage in an *Account of the London Daily Newspapers* (1811) that

Walter's anxiety to make 'The Times' as attractive a paper as it could be was shown in another way. In January 1807, he sent Henry Crabb Robinson, who was then thirty-two, and on the look-out for literary occupation, to Altona, there to act as special correspondent while the interest of the Napoleonic war was strong in that neighbourhood. Robinson was not to travel about in search of news or to watch affairs with his own eyes, but to reside in Altona. 'I was to receive from the editor of the "Hamburger Correspondenten,"' he said, 'all the public documents at his disposal, and was to have the benefit also of a mass of information of which the restraints of the German press did not permit him to avail himself.' His letters from Altona appeared in 'The Times' between March and August 1807, as correspondence from 'the banks of the Elbe,' and on his way home he sent three other letters from Stockholm and Gothenburg.¹

During the first half of 1808, being in London, Robinson was made 'a sort of foreign editor' by Walter. His duties were 'to translate from the foreign papers and write on foreign politics.' 'It was my practice,' he said, 'to go to Printing House Square at five, and to remain there as long as there was anything to be done. It was my office to cut out odd articles and paragraphs from other papers, decide on the admission of correspondence, &c.; but there was always a higher power behind. While I was in my room, Mr.

the editors of the daily papers were at that time supplied by 'the foreign department of the Post Office' with 'the principal contents of the continental newspapers, translated into the English language, for which the proprietors of the papers pay a weekly or annual sum,' the foreign papers themselves not being delivered till next day to those to whom they were addressed.

¹ *Diary, Reminiscences and Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson*, vol. i. p. 122.

Walter was in his, and there the great leader, the article that was talked about, was written.'¹ The principal leader writer of 'The Times,' while Robinson was thus employed, was Peter Fraser, a young clergyman who afterwards became rector of Kegworth, in Leicestershire. 'He used to sit in Walter's parlour,' we are told, 'and write his articles after dinner.' In Fraser's absence, the work was done by Edward Sterling, a retired captain of militia, who also wrote special articles on military and other questions, signed *Vetus*, which caused some stir at this time.² Walter's general adviser in the editorship seems to have been Combe, the brilliant and eccentric author of 'The Travels of Dr. Syntax in Search of the Picturesque,' who was a prisoner living within the rules of the King's Bench, but who was often let out on a holiday, which he spent in Printing House Square.³

Robinson was again employed as special correspondent of 'The Times' in the autumn of 1808. On this occasion he was sent to Spain, and his letters written between August 2 and the middle of the following January, were dated from 'the shores of the Bay of Biscay.' On reaching Corunna, he said, 'I put myself in immediate communication with the editor of the miserable little daily newspaper, and from him I obtained the Madrid papers and pamphlets. My business was to collect news and forward it by every vessel that left the port, and I spent the time between the reception and transmission of intelligence in translating the public

¹ *Diary, Reminiscences and Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson*, vol. i. p. 138.

² *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 153.—Carlyle, in his *Life of John Sterling* (p. 35), says that Captain Sterling, the father, began to write for *The Times* in 1812, and a collection of his letters, signed *Vetus*, and reprinted in a volume, appeared between March 10 and May 10, in that year. But, according to Robinson, the engagement began three or four years earlier.

³ *Diary of Henry Crabb Robinson*, vol. i. pp. 153, 154.

documents and in writing comments. I was anxious to conceal the nature of my occupation, but I found it necessary from time to time to take some friends into my confidence.'¹ Soon after his return to England Robinson ceased to write for 'The Times,' but his parting with Walter was friendly, and they continued on good terms.²

While 'The Times' and other young papers were making their way, those of an older sort were dropping out. The once famous 'Public Advertiser' had gradually lost ground during many years before 1792, when Henry Sampson Woodfall sold it, and it disappeared altogether in 1794. Its place was in some sort taken by 'The Morning Advertiser,' the first number of which was published on February 8, 1794, and which, though it did not quite set the fashion, is the most noteworthy example of a class of journalism that was now becoming important. Anxious to have an organ of its own, the society of licensed victuallers started 'The Morning Advertiser,' to a copy of which every subscriber was entitled, and thus a respectable circulation was at once secured, along with a good advertising connection, and a convenient medium was established both for special trade information, and for the presenting of such general news and the advocacy of such political and social opinions as were most approved by the compact and ready-made body of readers. There was not room for much independence or literary culture in this plan, but in the case of 'The Morning Advertiser' it worked well. Some other trade journals were less successful.

¹ *Diary of Henry Crabb Robinson*, vol. i. p. 143.

² Robinson says (p. 152): 'He had a kindly feeling towards me, and his conduct had been uniformly friendly and respectful. He had never treated me as one who received his wages, and at his table no one could have guessed our relation to each other.'

‘The Gazetteer,’ which had for a long time been ‘the booksellers’ paper,’ having been bought up by Daniel Stuart in 1798 and absorbed in ‘The Morning Post,’ a successor to it, ‘The British Press,’ was started in 1803 with a great flourish of trumpets, but never managed to be prosperous. ‘The Day,’ commenced in 1798 and carried on for nearly twenty years in the interests of the auctioneers, had even feebler and less dignified life before it was merged in ‘The New Times’ in 1817; and the old ‘Public Ledger,’ for a long time the accredited organ of the whole mercantile community until ‘The Times’ usurped most of its functions, and afterwards specially concerned in shipping affairs, has alone survived to the present day, though the yet older ‘Lloyd’s List,’ commenced in 1726, flourished in its way until 1836, when it was incorporated with ‘The Shipping and Mercantile Gazette.’ One of the shortest lived of the class journals in George III.’s reign was ‘The Aurora,’ in which the hotel-keepers hoped to improve on the example of ‘The Morning Advertiser.’ It was commenced in 1802, under somewhat unfavourable conditions. ‘Our editor,’ said William Jerdan, one of its reporters, ‘was originally intended for the kirk, and was a well-informed person; but to see him at or after midnight, in his official chair a-writing his leader, was a trial for a philosopher. With the slips of paper before him, a pot of porter close at hand, and a pipe of tobacco in his mouth or casually laid down, he proceeded *secundum artem*. The head hung, with the chin on his collar-bone, as in deep thought—a whiff—another—a tug at the beer—and a line and a half or two lines committed to the blotted paper; by this process, repeated with singular regularity, he would contrive, between the hours of twelve and three, to

produce as decent a column as the ignorant public required.’¹

There were trade organs among the evening as well as among the morning papers. The booksellers, who in 1803 started ‘The British Press’ in opposition to ‘The Morning Post,’ at the same time, in further rivalry of Daniel Stuart, commenced ‘The Globe’ in

¹ Jerdan, *Autobiography*, vol. i. pp. 83-86. Mark Supple, who died in 1807, was another reporter for *The Aurora*, but his chief connection had been before this with *The Morning Chronicle*. His friend Peter Finnerly, a yet more famous reporter, gives this account of him: ‘Mark Supple was big-boned and loud-voiced, and had as much wit and fun as an Irish porter could carry. He took his wine freely at Bellamy’s (a great place in those days for reporters as well as M.P.’s), and then went up into the gallery and reported like a gentleman and a man of genius. The members hardly knew their own speeches again, but they admired his free and bold manner of dressing them up; none of them ever went to the printing office of *The Morning Chronicle*, to complain that the tall Irishman had given a lame, sneaking version of their sentiments. His manner seemed to please, and he presumed upon it. One evening as he sat at his post in the gallery, waiting the issue of things, a dead silence happened to prevail in the house. It was when Mr. Addington was Speaker. The bold leader of “the pressgang” was never much on serious business bent, and at this time he was particularly full of meat and wine. Delighted, therefore, with the pause, but thinking that something might as well be going forward, he called out lustily, “A song from Mr. Speaker.” Imagine Addington’s long, prim, upright figure, his consternation, and utter want of preparation for, or a clue to repel, such an interruption of the rules and orders of parliament. The house was in a roar. Pitt, it is said, could hardly keep his seat for laughing. When the bustle and confusion were abated, the sergeant-at-arms went into the gallery to take the audacious culprit into custody, and indignantly asked who it was; but nobody would tell. Mark sat like a tower on the hindermost bench of the gallery, imperturbable in his own gravity, and safe in the faith of the brotherhood of reporters, who alone were in the secret. At length, as the mace-bearer was making fruitless inquiries and getting impatient, Supple pointed to a fat Quaker who sat in the middle of the crowd, and nodded assent that he was the man. The Quaker was, to his great surprise, taken into immediate custody, but after a short altercation and some further explanation, he was released, and the hero of our story put in his place for an hour or two, but let off on an assurance of his contrition and of showing less wit and more discretion for the future.’—Knight Hunt, vol. ii. p. 273.

opposition to 'The Courier'; and 'The Globe' survived its comrade, being afterwards amalgamated with 'The Traveller,' which was for some years the special spokesman of the commercial travellers. 'The Traveller,' while it lasted, was much more than a class journal, being like 'The Globe,' and while it was edited by Edward Quin, as well as in later days, a bold advocate of political reforms. 'If it has not much wit or brilliancy,' said a contemporary critic, 'it is distinguished by sound judgment, careful information, and constitutional principles.'¹ 'The Star,' which Peter Stuart had established in 1788, was, however, during many years the leading evening paper on the Whig side, Campbell the poet being one of its writers after 1804, when he was engaged at a salary of four guineas a week,² just as 'The Courier,' while Street edited it for Daniel Stuart, was the principal supporter of the government. Among other and as violent Tory evening papers, 'The Sun' had during many years an evil reputation. It was started in 1792 by George Rose and others at the instigation of Pitt, especially to advocate their views on home and foreign policy.³ It was at first conducted with some

¹ *Edinburgh Review*, May 1823, p. 362.

² Beattie, *Life of Thomas Campbell*, vol. ii. p. 20.

³ 'I have just had a visit from young Walter,' James Bland-Burges, who was foreign under secretary, wrote on October 15, 1792, to Charles Long, afterwards Lord Farnborough, 'who is furious about the success of character of *The Sun*, and came to me, as to an impartial person, to complain of the partiality shown by the government, and especially by Mr. Rose, to that paper, which he said was very unjust, considering his long services, and the many advantages which government, and especially Rose, had derived from *The Times*. He told me it was well known that Rose recommended *The Sun*, and patronised its publisher; and he threw out strong hints of Mr. Aust giving early accounts of foreign transactions, which he also stated to be very ill usage. . . . On the whole, he was very sulky and impudent, and said if he found things went on as they are now doing, and if he did not find some support from me, who he knew by experience never interfered in the newspaper business, he certainly should not suffer himself to be ruined by the success *The Sun* must certainly

spirit, carrying on a fierce rivalry with ‘The True Sun,’ another Tory print. Before long, however, the kindest thing that could be said about it was that “‘The Sun” appears daily, but never shines.’¹

During the years before the close of the eighteenth century, great changes were made in the weekly press, the main features of which will be noticed hereafter. All the old-fashioned Saturday papers, like ‘Read’s Weekly Journal’ and ‘The London Chronicle,’ miscellanies of news compiled from the daily journals, with essays in the style of Johnson and Goldsmith, had died out, or were dying, and others of different sorts came to take their places. In 1777 London had only one weekly paper, ‘The London Chronicle’; in 1813 it had thirty-four, of which sixteen were published on Sundays. In the interval there had been upstarts and newcomers, appearances and disappearances, enough to provoke Crabbe’s mockery in 1785 :—

In shoals the hours their constant numbers bring,
Like insects waking to the advance of spring,
Which take their rise from grubs obscure that lie
In shallow pools, or thence ascend the sky ;
Such are these base ephemeras, so born
To die before the next revolving morn.

meet with from a priority of intelligence which, he had undoubted information, came from the treasury and our office. . . . From the whole tenor of his conversation it was evident that he had not the slightest idea of either of us having anything to do with it ; and he was much too angry not to have mentioned such a circumstance if he had suspected it.’ (*Bland-Burges Papers*, p. 226.) ‘Young Walter’ must have been the founder of *The Times*. The second John Walter was only eight years old in 1792. Sheridan, in one of his speeches in parliament, referred to *The Sun* as ‘one paper in particular, said to be the property of members of that house, which had for its motto a garbled part of a beautiful sentence, when it might, with much more propriety have assumed the whole :

Solem quis dicere falsum

Audeat ? Ille etiam cæcos instare tumultus

Sæpe monet, fraudemque, et operta tumescere bella.’

¹ *Edinburgh Review*, May 1823, p. 368.

Yet thus they differ : insect tribes are lost
 In the first visit of a winter frost ;
 While these remain, a base but constant breed,
 Whose swarming sons their short-lived sires succeed.
 No changing season makes their number less ;
 Nor Sunday shines a Sabbath on the press.
 Then, lo ! the sainted ' Monitor ' is born,
 Whose pious face some sacred texts adorn.
 As artful sinners cloak the sacred sin,
 To veil with seeming grace the guile within,
 So moral essays in his front appear,
 But all is carnal business in the rear—
 The fresh-coined lie, the secret whispered last,
 And all the gleanings of the six days past.
 With these, retired, through half the Sabbath day,
 The London loungeer yawns his hours away.

And perhaps it was only because no Sunday papers could reach his quiet country parish that the kindly parson was able to say with any chance of being listened to—

Not so, my little flock, your preacher fly,
 Nor waste the time no worldly wealth can buy ;
 But let the decent maid and sober clown
 Pray for these idlers of the sinful town.
 This day, at least, on nobler themes bestow,
 Nor give to Woodfall or the world below.¹

Neither of the Woodfalls had anything to do with ' Johnson's Sunday Monitor,' which, to Crabbe's horror, led the way in Sabbath desecration by newspapers in 1778. It fairly answered to the poet's description, however, and lived long and creditably after 1792, when ' The Observer,' established by Clement, began to take the lead of the Sunday papers, which, of course, were then sold at the same high price that the stamp duty rendered necessary for all the daily papers.

The proprietors of the Sunday papers were discreet. In 1799 Lord Belgrave, at the instigation of William Wilberforce, introduced in the House of Peers a bill for

¹ Crabbe, *The Newspaper*.

suppressing them on religious grounds ; but as it was urged that of the four Sunday papers then published three were sturdy supporters of the government, whose secular help condoned all their Sabbath-breaking, the motion was defeated.¹ As the number increased the government had less reason to be satisfied with the Sunday papers ; but most of them, in so far as they dealt with politics, were for some time ministerial.

Notable commencements of this time were 'Bell's Weekly Messenger,' started in May 1796, and 'Bell's Weekly Dispatch,' which dates from the autumn of 1801. John Bell, their founder, born in 1745, was a prodigy. 'He had no acquirements, perhaps not even grammar,' said Leigh Hunt, 'but his taste in putting forth a publication was new in those times, and may be admired in any.'² He issued 'The British Theatre,' and much else, besides starting several newspapers. His 'Messenger' was, from the first, especially a farmer's paper. His 'Dispatch' was chiefly a sporting paper, until 'Bell's Life,' established in 1822, superseded it as a chronicler of pugilism.

The growth of newspapers was not materially affected by the further increase of the stamp duty, which, with an allowance of twenty per cent. on large supplies, was raised to threepence-halfpenny in 1804, and to fourpence in 1815, the tax on advertisements being in the latter year advanced to three shillings and sixpence ; but these heavy burdens, necessitating a high charge, and hampering the proprietors in their efforts to give good money's worth to their readers, were an inevitable cause of much complaining.

¹ *Parliamentary History*, vol. xxxiv. p. 1006 ; *Life of Wilberforce*, vol. ii. p. 424.

² *Leigh Hunt's Autobiography*, vol. i. p. 276.

CHAPTER X.

DANIEL STUART'S WRITERS.

1795—1811.

THE group of contributors whom Daniel Stuart gathered round him after he had bought 'The Morning Post' was in many ways noteworthy, and his relations with them help us to know something of the literary side of newspaper enterprise in the years just before and after the commencement of the nineteenth century.

Stuart himself, as we have seen, was a remarkable man. Taking charge of 'The Post' when it had a circulation of only 350, and when it was despised even by the few readers whom it supplied with more scurrilous and scandalous gossip than was given in any other paper of the day, he made it, while in his hands, a more successful and influential journal than either 'The Morning Chronicle' was at that time under James Perry or 'The Times' under the first John Walter; and when he left it—to sink again into the disreputable condition from which he had raised it—he secured like fortune for another paper, 'The Courier,' which also was only powerful and profitable while he was its proprietor. In his old age he prided himself, with reason, on the skill with which, as a shrewd man of business, he had so handled two shattered properties as to make them, not only great political authorities and pioneers

of a new order of journalism, but also sources of considerable wealth, and he was then inclined to undervalue the help he had received from those who wrote for him ; but they found him a good paymaster, according to the scale of pay in vogue at that time, and a generous friend. He was also a man of much literary taste and political tact, and, writing well himself, he gave further evidence of his ability, for which he deserves credit, in taking advantage of so much of the literary skill and political intelligence that were then in the newspaper market.

He was not yet twenty-nine when, in the autumn of 1795, he became proprietor of 'The Morning Post,' and his brother-in-law, James Mackintosh, was only his senior by a year. Mackintosh had just been called to the bar, and—rendered already famous by the 'Vindiciæ Gallicæ,' with which he had rebutted Burke's 'Reflections on the French Revolution'—was too staunch an opponent of Pitt's foreign policy to be in full agreement with the views put forward in 'The Morning Post.' But he and Stuart were fast friends as well as relations, and though his share in the original writing for the paper, being anonymous, cannot now be ascertained, it appears to have been considerable ; and the dignity and vigour of the articles published under the new editorship must be attributed in great measure to his influence, even when he was not himself the writer. Much of his spare time, however, had to be given to 'The Oracle,' for which he had 'superintended the foreign news' since 1789 ; and of which his other brother-in-law, Peter Stuart, now had charge.¹ Perhaps Mackintosh was more helpful to 'The Morning Post' as an adviser of its editor, supplying him with political information and guiding his policy, than as an actual contributor.

¹ Daniel Stuart in *Gentleman's Magazine*, July 1838, p. 24.

It was to him at any rate that Daniel Stuart owed his introduction to at least one of his principal contributors, and through this one to three or four others.

Mackintosh, a widower since the previous April,¹ went down to Bristol at Christmas 1797, on a visit to the Wedgwoods, with whom Coleridge was making a longer stay. The lawyer was much struck by the poet, although, before their residence under the same roof was over, Coleridge quarrelled with Mackintosh, who was a skilful debater, and who seems to have taken an unkind pleasure in bringing out his hazy notions on religion and philosophy and then overwhelming him by his 'sharp cut-and-thrust fencing' in argument. While they were still friends, however, Mackintosh wrote up to Stuart asking him to put some work in the way of Coleridge. Stuart arranged to do this, and from the commencement of 1798 Coleridge was engaged to write 'pieces of poetry and such trifles' for 'The Morning Post' at a salary of a guinea a week, he being expected, it would seem, to supply, on an average, one poem each week for his guinea.² The pay was not bad, seeing that most of his contributions were short epigrams and squibs, generally of not more than four or sometimes two lines apiece,³ and that of these Coleridge only furnished ten or a dozen

¹ Of his late wife, Stuart's sister, Mackintosh said in a letter to a friend: 'I met a woman who, by the tender management of my weaknesses, gradually corrected the most pernicious of them. She gently reclaimed me from dissipation. She propped my weak and irresolute nature. She urged my indolence to all the exertions that have been useful or creditable to me, and she was perpetually at hand to admonish my heedlessness and improvidence.'—R. J. Mackintosh, *Life of Sir James Mackintosh*, vol. i. p. 91.

² *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1838, p. 485.

³ Such of them as his daughter could trace, and as were not included by Coleridge himself in his collected poems, are printed in *Essays on his own Times*, which also gives most of the prose contributions to *The Morning Post* and *The Courier*. With a very few exceptions, all these were, of course, anonymous.

in the course of eight months. He started splendidly, however, with his famous 'war eclogue,' 'Fire, Famine, and Slaughter,' which, having been written early in 1796, was copied out and first published in 'The Morning Post' of January 8, 1798, and caused some excitement and not a little indignation by its allusion to Pitt—'letters four do form his name'—as the person who had let loose the three malevolent forces on the world; of whom Slaughter said, for instance:

He came by stealth, and unlocked my den,
And I have drunk the blood since then
Of twice three hundred thousand men.

Another poem, worth its guinea many times over, was 'The Recantation,' written in February 1797, and afterwards styled 'France, an Ode,' which, without the fifth stanza, appeared in 'The Post' of April 16, 1798, with a preface in which Stuart said: 'The following excellent ode is in unison with the feelings of every friend to liberty and foe to oppression, of all who, admiring the French Revolution, detest and deplore the conduct of France towards Switzerland. It is very satisfactory to find so zealous and steady an advocate for freedom as Mr. Coleridge concur with us in condemning the conduct of France towards the Swiss cantons. The poem itself is written with great energy. The second, third, and fourth stanzas contain some of the most vigorous lines we have ever read.' Those readers of 'The Morning Post' who did not discover sedition and blasphemy in them shared Stuart's admiration of 'The Recantation' and of 'Fire, Famine, and Slaughter'; but Stuart complained that he did not get more poems of the same sort, and that some which he did get were not to his liking. One piece, which he refused to publish, was an ungenerous attack on the man who had befriended Coleridge. 'Mackintosh,'

said Stuart, 'had had one of his front teeth broken, and the stump was black. The poem described a hungry pert Scotchman, with little learning but much brass, with a black tooth in front, indicative of the blackness of his heart.' ¹

Coleridge was only twenty-five when he began to write for 'The Morning Post'; but he had already followed up his first contribution, in 1793, to 'The Morning Chronicle,' by sending other poems to Perry, and had done more important work for 'The Critical Review' and 'The Monthly Magazine,' besides making, in 'The Watchman,' a luckless experiment at editing and publishing a weekly paper or magazine on his own account; and he was now glad of all the money he could earn, though not inclined or able to earn it in businesslike ways. During part of 1798, according to Stuart, 'Coleridge attended not at all to his engagement with me, but went about the country on other pursuits.' His friend Southey supplied the deficiency, however; and when Coleridge went to Germany with Wordsworth and Wordsworth's sister, in September, Southey continued to write verse for 'The Morning Post,' drawing the same salary of a guinea a week for his own use.² In the autumn of 1799 Coleridge returned to England, and soon after that he entered upon a more important engagement with Stuart.

There has been much controversy about this engagement, its nature and duration, and from admirers of Coleridge there has been much condemnation of Stuart for his treatment of the poet; but the facts, so far as we know them, if fairly looked at, reflect no blame on either party. Coleridge was a profound thinker, a brilliant talker, and an excellent writer of prose as well

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, May, 1838, p. 486.

² *Ibid.*, p. 487.

as of poetry, but he was not suited for a journalist, bound to supply, at fixed times and at regular intervals, so much 'copy' as was required from him; and we need not be surprised at his soon breaking down in the uncongenial work that he had undertaken, partly because he wanted to earn money, and partly because, before trial, he thought the work would be agreeable to him. Nor is it strange that Stuart should have been disappointed at the failure of an arrangement from which, when it was begun, he had evidently expected much advantage both to himself and to the friend whom he honestly desired to serve, and did serve very generously so far as he could, and whom it is plain that he all along very highly esteemed for his many excellent qualities, although he soon found, and was repeatedly reminded, that his friend was a difficult man to deal with.

Immediately after Coleridge's return from Germany, he resumed the writing of occasional poems for 'The Morning Post,' one short poem of his being published on August 29, and his next contribution being the first draft of 'The Devil's Thoughts,' which was afterwards considerably altered. Other verse followed, and in December it was decided that Coleridge, as Stuart said, should 'give up his whole time and services to "The Morning Post,"' and receive in return Stuart's 'largest salary.' What that salary was we are not told, but as Coleridge, who was quite satisfied with it, stated that at that date 350*l.* a year was all he cared to earn, and as the Wedgwoods then allowed him a pension of 150*l.* a year which he sent to his wife, we may assume that it was not less than about 4*l.* a week, though partly paid in board and lodging. 'I took a first floor for him,' Stuart tells us, 'in King Street, Covent Garden, at my tailor's, Howell's, whose wife was a cheerful, good housewife, of middle age, who I knew would nurse

Coleridge as kindly as if he were her son ; and he owned he was comfortably taken care of.' ¹

The scheme began well. Coleridge wrote a column of shrewd and trenchant criticism on the new constitution for the French Republic, under Bonaparte as first consul, which had just then been promulgated. This article appeared in 'The Morning Post' of December 26, and there was another on the 31st. 'I dedicate my nights and days to Stuart,' Coleridge wrote to Wordsworth at this time.² At least fourteen long articles, and perhaps four or five more, dealing almost exclusively with French politics and with England's concern therein, were supplied by him in the course of January, and about half as many in February. Thus far, Stuart could not grumble about his bargain, and newspaper readers were astonished and delighted at the forcible and wise writing that was now provided for them. Two articles in particular, one discussing Lord Grenville's reply to Bonaparte's overtures for peace at the end of January, and the other analysing Pitt's character, which was published on March 19, 1800, became the talk of the town. Of the article on Pitt and 'The Devil's Thoughts,' Stuart said, 'I never knew two pieces of writing, so wholly disconnected with daily occurrences, produce so lively a sensation. Several hundred sheets extra were sold by them, and the paper was in demand for days and weeks afterwards.'³ The article on Pitt, however, was apparently the only one that Coleridge supplied in March, and he wrote but one during the following month. His energy was already nearly exhausted, and even Stuart's unusual efforts to keep him up to the mark were of no avail.

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1838, p. 487.

² Dr. Wordsworth, *Life of Wordsworth*, vol. i. p. 160.

³ *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1838, p. 488.

‘My practice,’ said Stuart, ‘was to call on him in the middle of the day, talk over the news, and project a leading paragraph for the next morning. In conversation he would make a brilliant display. This reminds me of a story he often told with glee. At a dinner-party, Sir Richard Phillips, the bookseller, being present, Coleridge held forth with his usual splendour, when Sir Richard, who had been listening with delight, came round behind his chair, and, tapping him on the shoulder, said, “I wish I had you in a garret without a coat to your back.” In something like this state I had Coleridge; but, though he would talk over everything so well, I soon found he could not write daily on the occurrences of the day.’ Finding that he could not keep his erratic contributor at work by shutting him up in his King Street lodging, Stuart tried another plan. ‘I took him to the gallery of the House of Commons, in hopes he would assist me in parliamentary reporting, and that a near view of men and things would bring up new topics in his mind. But he never could write a thing that was immediately required of him. The thought of compulsion disarmed him.’¹

On one occasion Coleridge did a memorable piece of parliamentary reporting. Pitt was to make an important speech on February 17, asking for a war vote. According to Coleridge, or rather to Gillman writing about it long afterwards, he had to be so many hours in the house waiting for the oration that, after listening to its florid beginning, and hearing enough of what followed to know that it was ‘a repetition of words, and words only,’ he fell asleep, and only woke up in time to go back to the office—where, a report of some sort being needed, he ‘volunteered a speech for Mr. Pitt, and wrote one off-hand which answered the purpose exceed-

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1838, pp. 487, 488.

ingly well.’¹ Stuart averred, however, that he also was in the house at the time, that Coleridge did not go to sleep, and that his report was fairly accurate, except when he purposely altered the phrases, as in making Pitt call Bonaparte ‘the child and nursling’—instead of ‘the child and champion’—of Jacobinism.²

Coleridge’s ill health, causing nervous depression as well as nervous excitement, each of them as great an obstacle as physical pain to steady newspaper work, explains his inability to meet Stuart’s requirements. ‘Having arranged with him the matter of a leading paragraph one day,’ said Stuart, ‘I went about six o’clock for it. I found him stretched on the sofa groaning with pain. He had not written a word, nor could he write. The subject was one of a temporary, an important, and a pressing nature. I returned to “The Morning Post” office, wrote it out myself, and then I went to Coleridge, at Howell’s, read it over, and begged he would correct it and decorate it a little with some of his light, graceful touches. When I had done reading, he exclaimed, “Me correct that ! It is as well written as I or any other man could write it.” And so I was obliged to content myself with my own words.’³

Though he had already ascertained that Coleridge was not to be relied upon for a regular supply of ‘copy’ at regular intervals, Stuart knew the value of such help as Coleridge could render when he chose or was well enough. ‘Could Coleridge have been so far a man of business,’ he said several years afterwards in a letter to Henry Nelson Coleridge, ‘as to write three or four hours a day, there was nothing I would not have paid for his assistance. I would have taken him into partnership, and I would have enabled him to make a

¹ Gillman, *Life of Coleridge*.

² *Gentleman’s Magazine*, May, 1838, p. 488.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 487.

large fortune. To write the leading paragraphs of a newspaper I would prefer him to Mackintosh, Burke, or any man I ever heard of. His observations not only were confirmed by good sense, but displayed extensive knowledge, deep thought, and well-grounded foresight: they were so brilliantly ornamented, so classically delightful. They were the writings of a scholar, a gentleman, and a statesman, without personal sarcasm or illiberality of any kind.' ¹

There can be no doubt that, early in 1800, Stuart did offer Coleridge a permanent and lucrative engagement, though probably Coleridge exaggerated when he told a friend that Stuart had proposed terms to him by which he could 'make almost sure of 2,000*l.* a year.' Whatever the proposal was, however, it was scouted. 'I told him,' the enthusiastic poet and philosopher wrote, 'that I could not give up the country and the lazy reading of old folios for two thousand times 2,000*l.*; in short, that, beyond 350*l.* a year, I considered money as a real evil.' ² And instead of remaining in London, to be looked after by Stuart and Mrs. Howell, and to go on earning the modest income that he thought would content him, Coleridge, in the summer of 1800, went to live, in a sort of partnership with his wife's brother-in-law, Robert Southey, at Greta Hall, near Keswick, whence he sent occasional articles to 'The Morning Post,' but apparently not more than about twenty during the next two years. For these and for a few fresh poems he was duly paid by Stuart; and some of his contributions, at any rate, were extremely helpful to the paper.

His most important articles during these years were six, published in the autumn of 1802, denouncing

¹ Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, vol. ii. p. 395 (Biographical Supplement).

² *Essays on his own Times*, vol. i. p. xci. (Introduction).

Bonaparte, and so severely criticising the peace of Amiens, as it was called, which had been concluded in the previous April, that Fox, who thought they were written by Mackintosh, referred to them in the House of Commons as a principal cause of the renewal of the war.¹ They certainly gave great offence to the French first consul, and much satisfaction to the English war party; so that Coleridge, who had somewhat changed his political opinions by this time, might now be charged, justly or unjustly, as he had charged Pitt four years before, with having had a hand in unloosing the cruel forces of Fire, Famine, and Slaughter.

Speaking of his share in promoting the political power and commercial success of 'The Morning Post,' which he somewhat over-estimated, Coleridge said: 'I am persuaded that "The Morning Post" proved a far more useful ally to the government in its most important objects, in consequence of its being considered as moderately anti-ministerial, than if it had been the avowed eulogist of Mr. Pitt. The rapid and unusual increase in the sale is a sufficient pledge that genuine impartiality, with a respectable portion of literary talent, will secure the success of a newspaper without the aid of party or ministerial patronage. But by impartiality I mean an honest and enlightened adherence to a code of intelligible principles.'² In so far as he had a code of intelligible principles, Coleridge loyally adhered to it, in and out of 'The Morning Post'; and of literary talent he had more than a respectable portion, though he used it but fitfully. 'Worlds of fine thinking lie buried in that vast abyss, never to be disentombed,' wrote De Quincey concerning the better class of newspapers in his day. 'Like the sea it has swallowed treasures without end, that no diving bell will bring up again; but nowhere,

¹ *Biographia Literaria*, vol. i. p. 222, note.

² *Ibid.*, p. 220.

throughout its shoreless magazines of wealth, does there lie such a bed of pearls, confounded with the rubbish and *purgamenta* of ages, as in the political papers of Coleridge.'

Writing in all some sixty or seventy articles in 'The Morning Post,' in the course of three years, and chiefly in the early months of 1800 and the autumn of 1802, besides poems and scraps of verse in 1798 and 1799, Coleridge also procured for it contributions from some of his most intimate friends. Southey was his principal assistant and *locum tenens* in the laureateship of the paper; but Wordsworth and Charles Lloyd also helped to fill the 'poet's corner,' which generally contained something on three or four days out of the six in every week. As early as February 13, 1798, we find a sonnet by W. W., which was probably Wordsworth's, though it was not included among his reprinted poems; while on February 24 we have a signed anacreontic by Lloyd, and two days later an 'inscription for a monument at Merida' by Southey. There were other verse writers on the staff of 'The Morning Post,' however—one known by the pseudonym of Tabitha Bramble being the most profuse of all; and there was a plentiful supply of short skits, like this 'Impromptu on reading a notice to the creditors of Homer, a linendraper, and lately a bankrupt,' which appeared on April 19, 1798:

That Homer should a bankrupt be
Is not so very *Od-d'-ye-see*,
Since (but perhaps I'm wrong instructed)
Most *Ill-he-had* his books conducted.

Those lines may or may not have been written by Lamb, who evidently did a great deal of unsigned work for 'The Post,' though Stuart said: 'As for good Charles Lamb, I never could make anything of his writings. Coleridge often and repeatedly pressed me to settle him

on a salary, and often and repeatedly did I try ; but it would not do. Of politics he knew nothing ; they were out of his line of reading and thought ; and his drollery was vapid when given in short paragraphs fit for a newspaper.' ¹

Lamb was a copious contributor of short paragraphs, generally under the head of 'Fashionable Intelligence,' or as pendants to the political and other notes, which, whether vapid or not, helped to amuse the readers of 'The Post' ; and he gave a better account than Stuart did of his achievements in this way. 'In those days,' he reported, 'every morning paper, as an essential retainer to its establishment, kept an author, who was bound to furnish daily a quantum of witty paragraphs. Sixpence a joke—and it was thought pretty high too—was Dan Stuart's settled remuneration in these cases. The chat of the day, scandal—but, above all, dress—furnished the material. The length of no paragraph was to exceed seven lines. Shorter they might be, but they must be poignant. A fashion of flesh-, or rather pink-, coloured hose for the ladies, luckily coming up at the juncture when we were on our probation for the place of chief jester to S.'s paper, established our reputation in that line. We were pronounced "a capital hand." O the conceits which we varied upon red in all its prismatic differences ! from the trite and obvious flower of Cytherea to the flaming costume of the lady that has her sitting upon "many waters." Then there was the collateral topic of ankles. What an occasion to a truly chaste writer, like ourself, of touching that nice brink, and yet never tumbling over it, of a seemingly ever approximating something "not quite proper" ! while, like a skilful posture-master balancing between decorums and their opposites, he keeps the line from

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, June 1838, p. 577.

which a hair's-breadth deviation is destruction ; hovering in the confines of light and darkness, or where "both seem either ;" a hazy, uncertain delicacy—Autolycus-like in the play, still putting off his expectant auditory with "Whoop, do me no harm, good man !" But, above all, that conceit arrided us most at the time, and still tickles our midriff to remember, where, allusively to the flight of Astræa—*ultima cœlestium terras reliquit*—we pronounced, in reference to the stockings still, that, "Modesty taking her final leave of mortals, her last blush was visible in her ascent to the heavens by the tract of the glowing instep." This might be called the crowning conceit, and was esteemed tolerable writing in those days. But the fashion of jokes, with all other things, passes away ; as did the transient mode which had so favoured us. The ankles of our fair friends in a few weeks began to resume their whiteness, and left us scarce a leg to stand upon. Other female whims followed, but none methought so pregnant, so invitatory of shrewd conceits and more than single meanings.'¹

Poor Lamb, having to leave home at eight o'clock every morning for his day's work at the India House, found it necessary to rise at five or half-past five, in order, he says, to get an hour or an hour and a half before breakfast in which to turn out his half-dozen witty paragraphs at sixpence apiece, so as to earn an extra eighteen shillings a week—"this manufactory of jokes being," as he said, "our supplementary livelihood, that supplied us in every want beyond mere bread and cheese." And the difficulty of getting hold of funny subjects, and of handling them funnily when found, soon became irksome to him, as monotonous and laborious as would be the eating of six cross-buns every

¹ *Essays of Elia*, 'Newspapers Thirty-five Years Ago.'

morning at daybreak for a twelvemonth. 'Half a dozen jests in a day (bating Sundays, too), why it seems nothing ! We make twice the number every day in our lives as a matter of course, and make no Sabbatical exemptions. But then they come into our head. But when the head has to go out to them—when the mountain must go to Mahomet—reader, try it for once, only for one short twelvemonth ! It was not every week that a question of pink stockings came up ; but mostly, instead of it, some rugged, untractable subject ; some topic impossible to be contorted into the risible ; some feature upon which no smile could play ; some flint from which no process of ingenuity could procure a scintillation. There they lay ; there your appointed tale of brickmaking was set before you, which you must finish, with or without straw, as it happened. The craving Dragon, the public—like him in Bel's temple—must be fed ; it expected its daily rations ; and Daniel and ourselves, to do us justice, did the best we could on this side bursting him.'¹

'Fashionable intelligence,' personal and spicy, had always been a speciality of 'The Morning Post' ; and Stuart, changing its politics, did not choose to abandon this means of pleasing his readers ; but the tone of this portion of the paper was greatly improved in his day, while Lamb was helping him with it. They were harmless, not scurrilous jokes, good-humoured and not vicious tittle-tattle, that now appeared. Lamb says that he worked on at the 'Morning Post' office, 'with its gilt globe-topped front, facing that emporium of our artists' grand annual exposure,' which was in those days held in Somerset House, Strand, till the paper passed out of Stuart's hands in 1803, when he transferred his services to 'The Albion,' the office of which,

¹ *Essays of Elia*, 'Newspapers Thirty-five Years Ago.'

'late Rackstrow's Museum,' was in Fleet Street. 'What a transition,' he exclaims, 'from a handsome apartment, from rosewood desks and silver inkstands, to an office—no office, but a den rather, but just redeemed from the occupation of dead monsters, of which it seemed redolent—from the centre of loyalty and fashion to a focus of vulgarity and sedition !'¹

'The Morning Post' became famous in Stuart's hands on account of other matter than such as Lamb supplied to it; and it had smart political articles, besides those which Coleridge, and perhaps Mackintosh, furnished. Though Stuart wrote much himself, he must have had able contributors, whose names have not come down to us, to assist him in discussing the stirring questions of the day—among which, if the French war was especially prominent, there were others as momentous as the troubles in Ireland that led to the Act of Union in 1800, and much else. In the actual work of the office his principal assistant was George Lane. 'At first,' Stuart said of Lane, 'he was slow and feeble, but his language was always that of a scholar and gentleman; rather tame, but free from anything low, scurrilous, or violent. After several years of instruction by me—I may say education—he had become a valuable parliamentary reporter, a judicious theatrical critic, a ready translator, and the best writer of *jeux d'esprit* I ever had. He had little knowledge of politics, and little turn for political writing; but he was a valuable assistant. He resided near the office, was ready and willing at all hours to go anywhere and report anything, and he could do everything. Sometimes I even entrusted the last duties of the paper, the putting it to press, to him. Of the corn riots in 1800 he and others gave long accounts in leaded large type, while "The

¹ *Essays of Elia*, 'Newspapers Thirty-five Years Ago.'

Times" and "Herald" had only a few lines in obscure corners in black. The procession proclaiming peace, the ascent of balloons, a great fire, a boxing match, a law trial—in all such occurrences "The Morning Post" outstripped its competitors.¹ By looking after the interests of the paper in ways of that sort, Lane rendered great service to Stuart, and Stuart was not ungrateful.

We have interesting evidence of Stuart's general mode of dealing with his staff, as well as of his relations with this assistant-editor, from the assistant-editor himself. 'During my connection with him,' said Lane, 'he uniformly treated me with exceeding kindness and great liberality, of which the following particulars may convey an idea. He proposed to me to enter into a written engagement with him, which I declined. My refusal appeared to surprise him, and he said if I felt any cause of dissatisfaction in the establishment it should be removed. I answered there was none: I was pleased with everyone in it and everything about it. He then said, if I did not consider my salary sufficient he was ready to increase it; to which I answered that I was perfectly satisfied, and felt myself amply compensated as I stood, but that I wished to hold myself a free man. This conversation took place at an early period of our connection, and upon that footing I remained until its close, during which interval he added more than once to my income, but not at my instance or request. The advance always came spontaneously and unsolicited. I may add that I never heard any member of the establishment complain of want of liberality on the part of Mr. Stuart. He wished to have his business done diligently, but was uniformly liberal in compensation.'²

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, July 1838, p. 25.

² *Ibid.*, September 1838, p. 276.

This testimony was all the more significant as it was given after Lane had seriously offended Stuart by leaving him, early in 1803, to become editor of the new daily paper, 'The British Press,' which was started in opposition to 'The Morning Post.' Lane only left his old employer, however, because Stuart had arranged to sell 'The Post,' which he did before the end of the year for about 25,000*l.*—forty times the amount he had given for it less than nine years before. After that Stuart devoted all his attention to 'The Courier,' until Peter Street, who was his partner and business manager from the first, undertook the editorship.

'The Courier' aimed all along at being a ministerial organ, and it brought on itself some ridicule by supporting in turn the Tory government under Addington, Pitt's second administration between 1804 and 1806, the short-lived administration of 'all the talents' under Lord Grenville, and the Tory revival under the Duke of Portland in 1807, which led to Perceval's premiership in 1809. Coleridge and his friends, however, had also abandoned most of the opinions at which Byron mocked when he said:—

All are not moralists, like Southey, when
He prated to the world of 'Pantisocracy ;'
Or Wordsworth, unexcised, unhired, who then
Seasoned his pedlar poems with democracy ;
Or Coleridge, long before his flighty pen
Let to 'The Morning Post' its aristocracy ;¹

and Coleridge, therefore, had no compunctions about offering to write again for his old friend.

Coleridge had been in Malta and elsewhere—being, it was alleged, hunted after and nearly caught by Bonaparte, who had not forgiven him for his articles in 'The Morning Post'—before the autumn of 1806, when he

¹ *Don Juan*, canto iii. stanza 93.

found himself in London without a home. He applied to Stuart, 'as his best friend,' and, though Stuart did not see his way to give him employment, he provided him with a lodging, such as it was, on the upper floor of the 'Courier' printing office, in the Strand, with a Mrs. Bainbridge, who lived on the basement, to wait upon him. 'There,' says De Quincey, 'did I often see the philosopher, with the most lugubrious of faces, invoking with all his might this uncouth name of "Bainbridge," each syllable of which he intoned with long-drawn emphasis, in order to overpower the hostile hubbub coming down from the creaking press and the roar from the Strand, which entered at all the front windows. "Mistress Bainbridge; I say, Mistress Bainbridge," was the perpetual cry.' If this asylum was not much to be grateful for, Coleridge was glad to accept other help from Stuart—loans of money, assistance in printing 'The Friend,' and so forth. In December 1809 and January 1810 'The Courier' contained eight vigorous letters on Spanish affairs, which Stuart says that Coleridge wrote for him 'rather as some return to me for the sums I had expended on his account than on my solicitation.'¹ But this was all the work he did for Stuart between the ages of thirty and thirty-nine—a fact worth remembering, in contradiction of a statement afterwards made by misinformed friends of Coleridge, to the effect that he had wasted his 'prime and manhood' in making the success of 'The Morning Post' and 'The Courier.'

Stuart would have put more work in Coleridge's way, he says, but 'Mr. Street, who was editor and half proprietor of "The Courier," never thought so highly of Coleridge's writings as I did, and whenever I proposed an engagement for Coleridge, Street received my sug-

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1838, p. 491.

gestion coldly.' At length, in April 1811, Stuart received a pitiful letter from the broken-down philosopher. 'If only I can procure any regular situation which might employ me and my pen from nine to two, five or even six days in a week,' wrote Coleridge, it would be a regeneration for him. He offered to come from Hammersmith to the 'Courier' office every day, if Stuart would let him, 'to read over the morning papers, &c., and to point out whatever seemed valuable to Mr. Street, so that I might occasionally write the leading paragraph when he might wish to go into the city, or to the public offices; and besides this, I could carry on a series of articles, a column and a half or two columns each, independent of small paragraphs, poems, &c., as would fill whatever room there was in "The Courier" whenever there was room.' 'Give me a month's trial,' he begged.¹

The month's trial, and more, was given to him; but evidently only at Stuart's instigation, and with but sullen assent from Street. 'An engagement was formed with Coleridge,' Stuart recorded, 'who attended punctually and wrote every forenoon during some weeks in the spring, and complained to me repeatedly that his writings were not inserted. I told him to have patience; that at present the paper was so filled with debates and advertisements there was no room; but that when parliament rose there would be abundant space to enable him to compensate as well for his present as for his future salary. When parliament rose Coleridge disappeared. I expected this. In short, Coleridge never would write anything that was required of him instantly, as for a daily newspaper. The sense of compulsion disarmed him—laid him prostrate.'² Those last sentences were ungracious and inaccurate. Coleridge, writing his first

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, June 1838, p. 584.

² *Ibid.*, p. 580.

article for 'The Courier' under this engagement on April 19, 1811, wrote thirteen in May, nine in June, eight in July, four in August, and eleven in September, forty-six in the course of five months;¹ besides all the rejected articles and all the hack-work. But his position was very irksome to him. In a letter to Stuart, dated June 4, after he had been six weeks in harness, he besought Stuart, if Street did not want him any longer, to put him 'in the way of some other paper, the principles of which are sufficiently in accordance with my own.' 'For while cabbage-stalks rot in dung-hills,' he added, 'I will never write what, or for what, I do not think right. All that prudence can justify is not to write what at certain times one may yet think.'²

These summer months of 1811 were nearly the most melancholy period in the whole of Coleridge's not too happy life. He complained that, in order to reach the Strand from Hammersmith by nine in the morning, he had to catch the coach at twenty minutes past seven, that the coach hire cost him eighteen shillings a week, unless he saved half by walking home in the evening, and that this amount he could ill spare out of his small earnings. He had frequently to forestall his weekly salary by borrowing a few pounds at a time from the door-keeper or cashier of 'The Courier,' and he resented the indignities to which he was exposed, but most of which, it would seem, he brought on himself. Though at starting he declared that he would gladly do any hack work that was required of him, and though we may well believe that he honestly intended to make himself useful

¹ *Essays on his own Times*, vols. ii. and iii.

² *Gentleman's Magazine*, June 1838, p. 586. In July 1811, Henry Crabb Robinson says (*Diary*, vol. i. p. 177), Coleridge asked him to use influence with Walter to get him employed as leader-writer on *The Times*, but Walter declined the offer.

in any way prescribed by his employers, he was mentally and physically unfit for the task. He could not write in a hurry or to order. What he did write was probably better worth reading than anything that Street could put in its place; and perhaps had Stuart, who understood and respected him, been editor of 'The Courier' at that time, it would all have been used with great advantage to the paper. But there was no sympathy between him and Street, who was narrow-minded and crotchety, only a good man of business in so far as he contrived to make 'The Courier' a good paying property and a fairly respectable ministerial organ. It was not possible for these two to get on well together, and Coleridge threw up his engagement on 'The Courier' in September 1811. In the autumn of 1814 he addressed to it six forcible letters, signed with his own name, about English misgovernment in Ireland; but his memorable experimenting in journalism had practically ended three years before.¹

Though he quarrelled with Street, Coleridge acquitted Stuart of blame for the hardships he complained of during his employment on 'The Courier.' Stuart afterwards reckoned up that he had paid Coleridge about 700*l.* for work that cannot have occupied, in fragments spread over twelve years, and chiefly in two periods of three and five months respectively, more than a year of his time in all; this money being in addition to numerous loans, which were equivalent to gifts, and other services. His friendship to Coleridge lasted through life, and Coleridge wrote to him as late as 1816: 'You are the only human being of whom I can say, with severe truth, that I never conversed with you for an hour without

¹ About 1814 or later, it is said, Coleridge wrote a series of newspaper articles on the condition of factory children; but I have been unable to trace them.

remarkable instruction ; and with the same simplicity I dare affirm my belief that my greater knowledge of man has been useful to you, though, from the nature of things not so useful as your knowledge of men has been to me.¹ When writing his 'Biographia Literaria,' before that date, however, Coleridge, exaggerating the extent of his work on 'The Morning Post' and 'The Courier,' as he might easily have done without intentional untruth or inordinate vanity, made some remarks which were unjust to Stuart. Though these were published in 1817, Stuart good-naturedly abstained from expostulating with him, or at any rate from publicly contradicting him during his lifetime. But after Coleridge's death, in 1834, his injudicious biographer, James Gillman, repeated and added to the erroneous statements, and this provoked an indignant remonstrance and defence of himself by Stuart in 'The Gentleman's Magazine' for 1838. Unfortunately, the admirers of Coleridge have chosen to accept his and his friend's blunders without Stuart's corrections.

Of Coleridge's friends, who had contributed with him to 'The Morning Post,' Wordsworth appears to have been the only one who also contributed to 'The Courier.' In anticipation of its appearance as a separate pamphlet, Wordsworth sent to Stuart's and Street's paper a series of extracts from his eloquent condemnation of the convention of Cintra in 1808 : 'but this he did,' said Stuart, 'to assist Coleridge,'² who probably received payment for the articles. Of the other contributors to 'The Courier' in these years and afterwards, we know little, and there is nothing especially worthy of record. Though almost—if not quite—the most prosperous newspaper then published, 'The Courier' had less literary value than some of its rivals.

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, June 1838, p. 588.

² *Ibid.*, p. 580.

CHAPTER XI.

ANTI-JACOBINS AND REFORMERS.

1797—1815.

THE disastrous and on every ground deplorable wars with France in which England was engaged, with one brief intermission, from 1793 till 1815, served no good purpose by teaching the lesson, which so few chose to learn, that all such crusading is mischievous and inexcusable; and its effects on the political, social, and financial condition of England itself were in no way compensated for by the fact that the lesson was in this respect somewhat better learnt. Journalism gained much, however, and even the hardships endured by many newspaper managers and writers had in the long run very beneficial results.

Before the French Revolution actually began, the causes that led to it were influencing English opinion; and, besides the widespread sympathy that thoughtful Englishmen felt for the victims of Bourbon oppression and of the evils incident to the degraded feudalism by which the oppression was rendered possible, Rousseau, Voltaire, and other pioneers of the Revolution had actual followers in our own country as well as in France. Socialism, republicanism, what its opponents called atheism, and other heresies sprang up; and though they showed themselves in pamphlets and poems, at meetings of democratic associations, and in the private

talk of men who shrank from saying openly what they thought, before there was much evidence of them in newspapers—for the newspapers, being high-priced, still circulated but little among the poor, and were never written specially for them—the newspapers were affected. Coleridge and his friends were only to a small extent disciples of Rousseau, and they soon abandoned that ‘pantisocracy’ with which they amused themselves for a time; but when Coleridge and his friends propounded their mild Radicalism in ‘The Morning Post’ and other papers, they were sneered at and denounced as Jacobins, and it was in vain that they repudiated the title.

What was understood by Jacobinism in his day we may gather from one of Coleridge’s admirable articles in ‘The Morning Post,’ which, entitled ‘Once a Jacobin always a Jacobin,’ discussed ‘this charitable adage at one time fashionable in the ministerial circles.’

‘The base venal creatures, and the blind and furious bigots, of the late ministry,’ he wrote in 1802, ‘comprehended under that word all who, from whatever cause, opposed the late war and the late ministry, and whom they hate for this opposition with such mortal hatred as is usual with bigots alarmed and detected culprits. “Once a Jacobin always a Jacobin,” signifies no more in the minds of these men than “Such a one is a man whom I shall never cease to hate.” With other men, honest and less violent anti-Jacobins, the word implies a man whose affections have been warmly and deeply interested in the cause of general freedom, who has hoped all good and honourable things both of and for mankind. In this sense of the word Jacobin, the adage would affirm that no man can ever become altogether an apostate to liberty who has at any time been sincerely and fervently attached to it. His hopes

will burn like the Greek fire, hard to be extinguished and easily rekindled. Even when he despairs of the cause, he will yet wish that it had been successful ; and even when private interests have warped his public character, his convictions will remain, and his wishes often rise up in rebellion against his outward actions and public avowals. Thus interpreted, the assertion "Once a Jacobin always a Jacobin" is so favourable a representation of human nature that we are willing—too willing, perhaps—to admit it even without proof. There is yet a third class of anti-Jacobins, and of this class we profess ourselves to be, who use the word Jacobin as they use the word Whig, and both words only for want of a better, who confess that Jacobin is too often a word of vague abuse, but believe that there are certain definite ideas, hitherto not expressed in any single word, which may be attached to this word, and who in consequence uniformly use the word Jacobin with certain definite ideas attached to it—those ideas and no other.

‘A Jacobin, in *our* sense of the term, is one who believes, and is disposed to act on the belief, that all or the greater part of the happiness or misery, virtue or vice, of mankind depends on forms of government ; who admits no form of government as either good or rightful which does not flow directly and formally from the persons governed ; who—considering life, health, moral and intellectual improvement, and liberty both of person and conscience, as blessings which governments are bound as far as possible to increase and secure to every inhabitant, whether he has or has not any fixed property, and moreover as blessings of infinitely greater value to each individual than the preservation of property can be to any individual—does consequently and consistently hold that every inhabitant who has attained

the age of reason has a natural and inalienable right to an *equal* share in the choice of the governors. In other words, the Jacobins affirm that no legislature can be rightful or good which did not proceed from universal suffrage. In the power and under the control of a legislature so chosen he places all and everything, with the exception of the natural rights of the man and the means appointed for the preservation and exercise of these rights, by a direct vote of the nation itself—that is to say, by a constitution. Finally, the Jacobin deems it both justifiable and expedient to effect these requisite changes in faulty governments by absolute revolutions, and considers no violences as properly rebellious or criminal which are the *means* of giving to a nation the power of declaring and enforcing its sovereign will. In brief, therefore, a Jacobin's creed is this :

1. A government is the organ by which form and publicity are given to the sovereign will of the people, and by which that will is enforced and exercised. 2. A government is likewise the instrument and means of purifying and regulating the national will by its public discussions, and by direct institutions for the comfort and instruction of the people. 3. Every native of a country has an equal right to that quantity of property which is necessary for the sustenance of his life and health. 4. All property beyond this, not being itself a right, can confer no right. Superior wisdom, with superior virtue, would indeed confer a right of superior power. But who is to decide on the possession? Not the person himself who makes the claim; and, if the people, then the right is given and not inherent. Votes, therefore, *cannot* be *weighed* in this way, and they *must not* be weighed in any other way. Nothing, therefore, remains possible but that they must be *numbered*. No form of electing representatives is rightful but that of universal suffrage. Every individual has a *right* to elect, and a capability of being elected. 5. The legislature has an absolute power over all other property but that of Article 3, unless the people shall have declared otherwise in the constitution. 6. All governments not constituted on these principles are unjust governments. 7. The people have a right to overturn them in whatever way it is possible; and any means necessary to this end become *ipso facto* right means. 8. It is the right and duty of each individual living under that government, as far as in him lies, to impel and enable the people to exercise these rights.

‘The man who subscribes to *all* these articles,’ Coleridge pointed out, ‘is a complete Jacobin ; to many but not all of them, a semi-Jacobin ; and the man who subscribes to any one article (excepting the second, which the Jacobin professes only in common with every other political sect not directly an advocate of despotism) may fairly be said to have a *shade* of Jacobinism in his character. If we are not greatly deceived, we could point out more than one or two celebrated anti-Jacobins who are not slightly infected with some of the worst symptoms of the madness against which they are raving, and one or two acts of parliament which are justifiable only upon Jacobin principles.

‘These,’ Coleridge went on to say, ‘are the ideas which we attach to the word Jacobin, and no other single word expresses them. Not republican : Milton was a pure republican, yet his notions of government were highly aristocratic ; Brutus was a republican, but he perished in consequence of having killed the Jacobin Cæsar. Neither does demagogue express that which we have detailed ; nor yet democrat. The former word implies simply a mode of conduct, and has no reference to principles ; and the latter does of necessity convey no more than that a man prefers in any country a form of government without monarchy or aristocracy, which in any country he may do and yet be no Jacobin, and which in some countries he can do without any impeachment of good sense or honesty. Whoever builds a government on personal and natural rights is, so far, a Jacobin. Whoever builds on social rights—that is, hereditary rank, property, and long prescription—is an anti-Jacobin, even though he should nevertheless be a republican, or even a democrat.’¹

It will be seen that in these sentences Coleridge

¹ Coleridge, *Essays on his own Times*, vol. ii. pp. 542-548.

very justly and pithily summed up, and criticised while he epitomised, the views put forward by Rousseau and other keen-eyed and visionary prophets and pioneers of the great modern revolution, and clumsily, faultily, and in some respects falsely interpreted by the Frenchmen who, in the latter years of the eighteenth century, undertook to turn theory into practice, and, in so doing, committed many blunders and worse than blunders. The problems there raised have not yet been solved either by theorists or by practical men ; and we need not wonder that the Tories of George III.'s reign were startled and alarmed by the crude presentment of them by men who found it easier in France to overturn the institutions of monarchy and aristocracy than to establish republican institutions in lieu. The Tories are to be blamed, not for being frightened, but for allowing their fright to drive them into courses that greatly aggravated the dangers they dreaded.

When George III. opened parliament in December 1792, he declared that 'the destruction of our happy constitution and the subversion of all order and government were being compassed by incendiaries and preachers of sedition, who were in league with French revolutionists'; and, though Fox boldly described this language as 'an intolerable calumny upon the people of Great Britain,' both houses of parliament endorsed the royal view, and approved a proclamation which had been issued authorising the militia to deal summarily with the promoters of tumult and rebellion, who were said to be plentiful. The foolish action of the government increased, if it did not wholly create, the danger it pretended to be in fear of, and the numerous prosecutions that ensued, resulting in long imprisonment in many cases and in hanging in a few, did all that could be done to make small perils great, and to remind many,

who would otherwise have submitted meekly to the rulers placed over them, that a change must be brought about.

That was how matters stood when the quarrel was brought boldly into the field of journalism by the starting, on November 20, 1797, of 'The Anti-Jacobin, or Weekly Examiner.' This very clever little paper was projected by George Canning and the energetic group of young politicians and scholars who, as disciples of Pitt, clamoured for more violent measures than Pitt himself proposed. Canning, now seven-and-twenty, had lately been made under secretary for foreign affairs, with Lord Grenville as his chief. With him were associated Hookham Frere, George Ellis, Banks Jenkinson (afterwards Earl of Liverpool), Lord Morpeth (afterwards Earl of Carlisle), Baron Macdonald, and other talented members of their group; Pitt himself giving an occasional article, and William Gifford, who was in his fortieth year, and already famous as the author of 'The Baviad' and 'The Mæviad,' being appointed editor.

'It may be thought a narrow and illiberal distinction,' Canning wrote in the preliminary announcement, full of biting irony, 'but we avow ourselves to be partial to the country in which we live, notwithstanding the daily panegyrics which we read and hear on the superior virtues and endowments of its rival and hostile neighbours. We do not dissemble that we reverence law, we acknowledge usage, we look upon prescription without hatred or horror, and we do not think these or any of them less safe guides for the moral actions of men than that new and liberal system of ethics whose operation is not to bind but to loosen the bands of social order, whose doctrine is formed not on a system of reciprocal duties, but on the supposition of indi-

vidual, independent, and unconnected rights, which teaches that all men are pretty equally honest, but that some have different notions of honesty from others, and that the most received notions are for the greater part the most faulty.' 'Of Jacobinism in all its shapes, and in all its degrees, political and moral, public and private, whether as it openly threatens the subversion of states or gradually saps the foundations of domestic happiness, we are the avowed, determined, irreconcilable enemies,' Canning further declared; and accordingly they proposed to give from week to week in 'The Anti-Jacobin' not only a record of important events and reflections thereon, but also—what would be the most important, and perhaps the largest part of the paper—'a contradiction and confutation of the falsehoods and misrepresentations concerning those events, their causes and their consequences, which may be found in the papers devoted to the cause of sedition and irreligion, to the pay or principles of France.' By this means the wickedness of the Jacobin press would be exposed, and its pernicious intentions would be made productive of good; for 'every week of misrepresentation will be followed by its weekly comment, and, with this correction faithfully administered, the longest course of "Morning Chronicles" or "Morning Posts," of "Stars" or "Couriers," may become not only innocent but beneficial.'¹

'The Anti-Jacobin' only ran through thirty-four numbers, being dropped, as had from the first been intended, at the close of the parliamentary session, on July 9, 1798;² but while it lasted it was a powerful

¹ This, it will be remembered, was written before *The Courier* became a supporter of the government, and even before Coleridge had begun to write for *The Morning Post*.

² Mr. Edmonds, in the preface to his edition of *Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin*, says: 'So alarmed became Mr. Wilberforce and others of the

medium in the hands of its skilful writers for attacking the Whigs as well as the more thoroughgoing sympathisers with the French revolutionists. Part of its policy, indeed, was to include in one category all who were not Tories of Pitt's, or rather of Canning's, school, and to make Fox and Erskine, Sheridan and Mackintosh, appear as disloyal and obnoxious as Horne Tooke or Paine, John Frost or Thelwall. Gifford wrote most, if not all, of the comments on statements in the other papers, which were classified, under three heads, as 'lies—downright and unblushing falsehoods,' 'misrepresentations,' and 'mistakes'; and the various contributors supplied longer articles, one or more each week, on the principal questions of the hour. The chief attraction of 'The Anti-Jacobin,' however, was its poetical section, not announced in the prospectus. Canning and Hookham Frere were smart satirists, and the brilliant verses, more witty than generous, which they and their colleagues supplied found plenty of readers, and delighted all who were not stung by them.

Canning, helped by Frere, led off in the first number with a parody of one of Southey's poems; and the second number, still making game of Southey, contained the famous joke in sapphics, 'The Friend of Humanity and the Needy Knife-grinder,' which caused a great sensation at the time of its publication, though its humour now seems somewhat coarse and strained. Less familiar, but perhaps the best poem in the series, and certainly the longest and most carefully prepared, as all the poets on the staff of 'The Anti-Jacobin' had a hand in writing it, was 'New Morality,' which filled

more moderate supporters of the ministers at the boldness of the language employed, that Mr. Pitt was induced to interfere, and *The Anti-Jacobin* ceased to exist.' There is no indication, however, that it was ever meant to be more than an ephemeral publication.

more than half of the last number. It was a parting thrust at the whole conglomeration of Radicals and reformers, running through nearly five hundred lines. In it Frere commenced by saying:—

From mental mists to purge a nation's eyes,
 To animate the weak, unite the wise,
 To trace the deep infection that pervades
 The crowded town, and taints the rural shades,
 To mark how wide extends the mighty waste
 O'er the fair realms of science, learning, taste,
 To drive and scatter all the brood of lies,
 And chase the varying falsehood as it flies,
 The long arrears of ridicule to pay,
 To drag reluctant dulness back to day,
 Much yet remains. To you these themes belong,
 Ye favoured sons of virtue and of song !
 Say, is the field too narrow ? are the times
 Barren of folly, and devoid of crimes ?

Canning wrote most of the poem, including these couplets:—

Sweet child of sickly Fancy ! her of yore
 From her loved France Rousseau to exile bore ;
 And, while midst lakes and mountains wild he ran,
 Full of himself, and shunned the haunts of man,
 Taught her o'er each lone vale and Alpine steep
 To lisp the story of his wrongs and weep ;
 Taught her to cherish still, in either eye,
 Of tender tears a plentiful supply,
 And pour them in the brooks that babbled by ;
 Taught by nice scale to mete her feelings strong,
 False by degrees, and exquisitely wrong—
 For the crushed beetle *first*, the widow'd dove,
 And all the warbled sorrows of the grove ;
Next for poor suffering guilt ; and *last* of all
 For parents, friends, a king and country's fall.
 Mark her fair votaries, prodigal of grief,
 With cureless pangs, and woes that mock relief,
 Droop in soft sorrow o'er a faded flower,
 O'er a dead jackass pour the pearly shower ;
 But hear unmoved of Loire's ensanguined flood,
 Choked up with slain—of Lyons drenched with blood—
 Of crimes that blot the age, the world, with shame ;
 Foul crimes, but sicklied o'er with freedom's name.

And, after more of this one-sided truth,

Such is the liberal justice which presides
 In these our days, and modern patriots guides—
 Justice, whose blood-stained book one sole decree,
 One statute, fills, 'The People shall be Free !'
 Free ! By what means ? By folly, madness, guilt,
 By boundless rapine, blood in oceans spilt,
 By confiscation, in whose sweeping toils
 The poor man's pittance with the rich man's spoils,
 Mixed in one common mass, are swept away
 To glut the short-lived tyrant of the day !

Canning, Frere, and Ellis combined their skill to produce this verse :—

O nurse of crimes and fashions ! which in vain
 Our colder servile spirits would attain,
 How do we ape thee, France ! but, blundering still,
 Disgrace the pattern by our want of skill.
 How do we ape thee, France ! nor claim alone
 Thy arts, thy tastes, thy morals, for our own,
 But to thy worthies render homage due,
 Their ' hairbreadth 'scapes ' with anxious interest view—
 Statesmen and heroines whom this age adores,
 Though plainer times would call them rogues and whores.

The cruellest portion of this cruel poem was that in which reformers and critics of all grades were imagined as welcoming the arrival in England, at the head of an army of atheists and supported by an army of soldiers, of Louis Marie de la Revellière de Lépeaux, the then famous author of the National Convention's announcement that 'the French nation would give assistance to all oppressed people who wished to recover their liberty.'

Rejoiced, our clubs shall greet him, and install
 The holy hunchback in thy dome, St. Paul !
 While countless votaries, thronging in his train,
 Wave their red caps, and hymn this jocund strain :

' " Couriers " and " Stars," sedition's evening host,
 Thou " Morning Chronicle," and " Morning Post,"

Whether ye make the Rights of Man your theme,
 Your country libel, and your God blaspheme,
 Or dirt on private worth and virtue throw,
 Still, blasphemous or blackguard, praise Lépeaux !

‘ And ye five other wandering bards, that move
 In sweet accord of harmony and love,
 Coleridge and Southey, Lloyd and Lamb and Co.,
 Tune all your mystic harps to praise Lépeaux !

‘ Priestley and Wakefield, humble, holy men,
 Give praises to his name with tongue and pen !
 Thelwall, and ye that lecture as ye go,
 And for your pains get pelted, praise Lépeaux !

‘ Praise him, each Jacobin, or fool, or knave,
 And your cropped heads in sign of worship wave !
 All creeping creatures, venomous and low,
 Paine, Williams, Godwin, Holcroft, praise Lépeaux !’¹

‘ The Anti-Jacobin,’ with all its cleverness, and especially by reason of that cleverness, was a mischievous and malicious attempt to misrepresent the views and actions of the opponents of Pitt’s government, and all the more objectionable because a member of the government was its leading spirit. Canning’s newspaper war against Whigs and Radicals, however, was legitimate in comparison with the policy pursued by Pitt and his associates in forcible and vindictive use of existing

¹ Though *The Anti-Jacobin* made its last appearance on July 9, 1798, there was started a few days before a monthly *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine* of the same politics, but much less brilliant, and more ponderous. Strange to say, it also was edited by a Gifford, or one who so called himself. John Richard Green was a bold and versatile adventurer, who, having to fly from his creditors in 1782, returned from France in 1788 as John Gifford, and was connected with several newspapers, besides editing *The Anti-Jacobin Review*. Befriended in many ways by Pitt, he wrote a four-volume pamphlet, styled *The Life of William Pitt*, after his patron’s death. James Mill, the friend and associate of Jeremy Bentham, as we shall see in a later chapter, was glad to earn money in his struggling days, by writing non-political articles for *The Anti-Jacobin Review*. William Gifford, it is hardly necessary to state, after editing Ben Jonson’s works, and other useful occupations, became the first editor of *The Quarterly Review* in 1809.

laws, and manufacture of fresh law, in the hope of putting down the sedition that they imagined and invented. Every year had its batch of press prosecutions, generally on flimsy charges, and with the undisguised object of punishing obnoxious printers, publishers, and writers, not so much for the particular offences alleged against them as for their boldness in criticising the proceedings of the ministry and its agents.

It was in order to increase the opportunities for this persecution that Pitt introduced his Newspaper Act in April 1798, which, making some regulations that have since been found harmless if not useful as regards the registration of proprietors, and so forth, did much more than that. It was a bill 'for preventing the mischief arising from newspapers being printed and published by persons unknown, and for regulating them in other respects'; and the 'other respects' were sufficiently various and tyrannical. It imposed heavy penalties on all in whose possession unstamped, including foreign, newspapers were found, or who sent them out of the country, and one of its clauses prescribed that 'every person who during the present war shall send any newspaper into any country not in amity with his majesty shall forfeit 500*l*.' ¹

The particular excuse for that act was the publication in 'The Courier' of a paragraph stating that some French prisoners in Liverpool had been cruelly treated by the authorities, and the inability of the government to find out either who was the author of the 'libel' or who was the responsible proprietor of the paper, so that it was prevented from bringing an action against anyone; and this although, in the opinion of the ministers, 'The Courier' was a 'scandalous outrage on law, morality, religion, and justice—the echo of France,

¹ 37 George III., cap. 78.

which propagated with unyielding industry the monstrous misrepresentations of the French directory and their detestable principles.' Sheridan and others denounced the bill. Tierney declared that 'he foresaw what would be its consequences to the liberty of the press, the clog it would create to talent and literature, the restraint it would be to political freedom.' Lord William Russell condemned it as 'an insidious blow to the liberty of the press.' Sir William Pulteney urged that 'the liberty of the press was of such a sacred nature that we ought to suffer many inconveniences rather than check its influence in such a manner as to endanger our liberties, for without the liberty of the press the freedom of this country would be a mere shadow.' Sir Francis Burdett reminded Pitt that his father, the Earl of Chatham, when he was urged to introduce a similar bill in order to protect himself from the calumnies with which he was assailed, had replied that 'the press, like the air, is a chartered libertine'; and in his rough style of scorn suggested that the bill was the most effectual means that could be devised by a 'tyrannically disposed prince, supported by an unscrupulous, profligate minister, backed by a notoriously corrupt parliament,' to confirm their 'triple tyranny.'¹ But the bill was passed, and though it was followed by a long series of press prosecutions, which it rendered possible, it and those prosecutions had important results in educating a Radical party bold enough to brave prosecution till it was strong enough to prevent it.

Notable illustration of the way in which Tory persecution converted even weak-minded and scarcely honest men into sturdy Radicals is furnished by the career of William Cobbett. Born in 1762, Cobbett

¹ *Parliamentary History*, vol. xxxiii. pp. 1418-1482.

had had varied experience as a farmer's boy, a lawyer's drudge, and a private soldier, before he went to America, and there, prospering as a bookseller, made himself notorious as the writer of violent Tory pamphlets, under the pseudonym of Peter Porcupine. His opinions, and the terms in which he uttered them, gave great offence to his neighbours in Philadelphia, and, being convicted of a libel and ordered to pay a fine of 5,000 dollars, he avoided payment by running away. He returned to England after eight years' absence, and had then money and influence enough to start a daily paper, 'The Porcupine,' the first number of which appeared on November 24, 1800, which was intended to be as violent, if not as brilliant, a champion of Toryism as 'The Anti-Jacobin' had been.

Cobbett claimed that what he had seen and endured in the United States specially qualified him to instruct and warn his countrymen of the dangers they ran from following French guidance, and sanctioning any attempts at altering the political and social constitution of England. 'Those who want experience of the consequences,' he said in the prospectus of 'The Porcupine,' 'may, for aught I know, be excused for conniving at these attempts; but for me, who have seen acts passed by a republican legislature more fraudulent than forgery or coining—for me, who have seen republican officers of state offering their country for sale for a few thousand dollars—for me, who have seen republican judges become felons, and felons become republican judges—for me to hold my hands and tamely to listen to the insolent eulogists of republican governments and rulers, would be a shameful abandonment of principle, a dastardly desertion of duty.' 'The intrigues of the French, the servile, the insidious, the insinuating French,' he declared, 'shall be an object of my constant

attention. Whether at war or at peace with us, they still dread the power, envy the happiness, and thirst for the ruin of England. Collectively and individually, the whole and every one of them hate us. Had they the means, they would exterminate us to the last man; they would snatch the crutch from our parents, the cradle from our children, and our happy country itself would they sink beneath those waves on which they now flee from the thunder of our cannon. When we shall sheathe the sword it is for our sovereign to say; but while we retain one drop of true British blood in our veins, we never shall shake hands with this perfidious and sanguinary race, much less shall we make a compromise with their monkey-like manners and tiger-like principles.' There was much more loud talk of this sort; and Cobbett added, 'I feel an irresistible desire to communicate to my countrymen the fruit of my experience, to show them the injurious and degrading consequences of discontentment, disloyalty, and innovation, to convince them that they are the freest as well as the happiest of the human race, and above all, to warn them against the arts of those ambitious and perfidious demagogues who would willingly reduce them to a level with the cheated slaves in the bearing of whose yoke I have had the mortification to share.'

'The Porcupine,' projected in that temper, continued to be a rowdy supporter of the Tory government, and an insolent assailant of all who differed from it, during more than a year. Windham, who lost his secretaryship-at-war by Addington's displacement of Pitt as premier in May 1801, stated in parliament that by one of its articles the writer had merited a statue in gold. But no minister proposed to reward Cobbett for his services with either place or pension, and—as 'The Porcupine,' though more forcibly written, was no more useful to the

government or acceptable to the public than 'The True Briton,' which ever since the commencement of 1793 had been kept alive by ministerial help in order to do the same work—Cobbett found it expedient or necessary in November 1801 to assign his property in 'The Porcupine' to the owner of 'The True Briton.'¹ These two papers were amalgamated on January 1, 1802, and on the 16th of the same month Cobbett started another and a smaller paper, 'The Weekly Political Register,' which, though not at first opposed to the Tories, was much less energetic in its support of them.

It is only charitable to suppose that Cobbett's convictions, such as they were, were undergoing a change at this time, but we may reasonably assume that they would have been unchanged had he received from the government the encouragement that he thought he deserved. For not thus encouraging him the government is certainly not to be blamed. It already had far too many disreputable hangers-on in the newspaper world, who only rendered it more obnoxious to sensible people than it might otherwise have been, and there would have been no wisdom in adding to the number. Cobbett was a far abler man, however, than most of those who were preferred to him, and the Addington administration made a serious mistake in converting him into an enemy. His 'Political Register' soon became a formidable assailant of the party and policy that its editor had hitherto supported, and the contemptuous indifference with which, as a friend, he had been treated was promptly followed by persecution that enabled him to

¹ *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, January 1802. In 1796 Lord Kenyon had ruled that the description of *The True Briton*, given in *The Courier*, as 'the most vulgar, ignorant, and scurrilous journal ever published in Great Britain,' was only a fair comment and not punishable as a libel. (Espinasse, *Reports of Cases at Nisi Prius*, vol. i. p. 437.)

be a far more formidable antagonist than the government was prepared for.

‘Cobbett’s Register,’ continued for more than thirty years, though after a time it assumed the form of an annual publication, was from the first more of a political magazine than a newspaper. It undertook to give, and gave very skilfully, a concise record of events, and especially of the proceedings in parliament. But each weekly number contained at least one forcible leading article or long letter, generally bearing Cobbett’s signature, in which he handled with his sledge-hammer pen nearly every question of importance as it arose, and constituted himself the censor of every party. Though snubbed by the Tories, he claimed for some years longer to be one of them, and, retaining all his old hatred of the French, his earliest avowed quarrel with the authorities resulted not from any inconsistency on his part, but from a ministerial change of front.

After the peace of Amiens had been trumped up in April 1802, it became the policy of the Addington government to keep on good terms with Bonaparte, but it was not able to restrain the abusive language that it had hitherto encouraged in the press; and there was much angry correspondence on the subject between the French directory and the English administration during the ensuing months, rendered all the more embarrassing because at this time there were a good many French republicans in England, who had come over to escape from and to denounce the new tyranny that was being shaped out of the liberating forces they had set in motion, and because many English reformers to whom the confusing term Jacobin had been applied were, for a while and in this respect, in substantial agreement with many of the Tories who loathed them. There were at least two French papers published in London which

made it their special business to attack the first consul—‘L’Ambigu,’ edited by Jean Peltier, and ‘Le Courrier Français de Londres’; and about these the French ambassador made formal complaint in July, including in his charges ‘Cobbett and other writers who resemble them.’ The British government began by answering the complaints in terms that would have been dignified if they had been consistent. ‘His majesty’s government neither can nor will, in consequence of any menace from a foreign power,’ wrote Lord Hawkesbury in August, ‘make any concession which may be in the smallest degree dangerous to the liberty of the press, as secured by the constitution of this country’; and he refused to take any action on Bonaparte’s behalf against the obnoxious writers.¹ The government afterwards yielded so far, however, as to prosecute Peltier, who was brought up for trial in February 1803 before Lord Ellenborough, with Spencer Perceval, the attorney-general, as his accuser, and Mackintosh to defend him. Mackintosh’s speech, which even Ellenborough declared to be ‘eloquence almost unparalleled,’ was a noble argument not only in justification of Peltier, but also for the liberty of the press in general,² but it was unsuccessful. Peltier was found guilty, though before the time came for the deferred sentence to be passed, war had been renewed between France and England, and he consequently escaped punishment. It ultimately transpired that he had actually been receiving pay from the English government for writing as he had done; and his employment was continued till 1815, when, in explanation of the grants made to him and other French journalists in London, Lord Castlereagh averred that ‘these grants were made for public and not for private services, and

¹ *Parliamentary History*, vol. xxxvi. pp. 1267-1295.

² It is printed in Mackintosh’s *Miscellaneous Works*.

for conveying instruction to the continent when no other mode could be found.'

Cobbett's connection with Peltier's case, which here chiefly concerns us, was noteworthy as illustrating the difference between such 'libels' as the government tolerated, or only made a pretence of punishing, and such others as it seriously resented. Though Cobbett was as outspoken as Peltier in his condemnation of Napoleon, he was not prosecuted for it; but he was attacked for interfering with English officials. In May 1804 he was tried for two offences: one of them the insertion in his 'Register' of two letters by an Irish judge, ridiculing Lord Hardwicke, who was viceroy of Ireland, as 'a very eminent sheep-feeder from Cambridgeshire,' with 'a wooden head,' and Lord Chancellor Redesdale as 'a very able and strong-built chancery pleader from Lincoln's Inn'; the other using language of his own in disparagement of the solicitor-general's conduct of the proceedings against Robert Emmett for inciting to rebellion. In both cases he was found guilty, and he was fined 500*l*.¹

This persecution, however, instead of silencing him, induced him to make his 'Register' a fearless and vindictive opponent of everything in the ministerial policy which his somewhat fickle judgment disapproved. He was never a thoroughgoing and comprehensive reformer. He was always more anxious to appear as a demagogue than as a champion of democracy, and he preferred to associate himself with Sir Francis Burdett, 'Orator' Hunt, and agitators of that stamp, than with the steady and persevering advocates of national progress, who insisted upon principle on the redress of grievances and the systematic rooting out of the evils by which the country was afflicted. But he made

¹ *State Trials*, vol. xxix. pp. 1, 54, 422.

himself formidable, and 'The Register' was in his hands a serviceable and powerful agency for the exposure of abuses. That he was allowed during so many years to carry on his violent and indiscriminate guerilla warfare against the several ministries that followed the Addington government is somewhat surprising ; but retribution fell upon him in 1809, when, for venturing to protest against the flogging of some militiamen under a guard of the German legion, and thus finding fault at once both with the rules of military discipline and with the employment of foreign mercenaries, he was sent to prison for two years and fined 1,000*l.* ; Hansard, the printer of 'The Register,' and two newsvendors, being also imprisoned for shorter terms.

In the meanwhile worthier Radicals than Cobbett, and a more important newspaper than 'The Political Register,' were coming to the front. The starting of 'The Examiner' by John and Leigh Hunt marks an epoch in the history of journalism.

John Hunt, the second son of a clergyman who got into some trouble because of the liberal opinions in politics and religion which honest thought and intelligent experience had forced upon him, was born about 1780, and started a printing business in Brydges Street, Strand, while his younger brother, James Henry Leigh Hunt, born in 1784, was writing juvenile poems and smart essays, in imitation of Goldsmith, and was trying to learn law in the office of his eldest brother Stephen. The law learning was abandoned when Leigh obtained a clerkship in the War Office, but the writing of poems and essays was continued and improved upon. Of the poems a small volume was made and published when the author was only seventeen, and some of the essays appeared, before he was twenty, as the lucubrations of 'Mr. Town, junior, Critic and Censor General,' in 'The

Traveller,' the recently established evening paper, of which Edward Quin was editor. 'I offered them with fear and trembling to Mr. Quin,' said Leigh, 'and was astonished at the gaiety with which he accepted them. What astonished me more was a perquisite of five or six copies of the paper, which I enjoyed every Saturday when my essays appeared, and with which I used to reissue from Bolt Court in a state of transport. Luckily the essays were little read ; they were not at all noticed in public ; and I thus escaped the perils of another premature laudation for my juvenility.'¹

These, however, were only 'a stop-gap,' as he said ; as also were the theatrical criticisms that he wrote for 'The News,' a Sunday paper, which was started in April 1805, and of which his brother John was during two years and a half the printer and, apparently, the editor. Young as he was, the new theatrical critic set an example that astonished his rivals and pleased many readers. 'We saw that independence in theatrical criticism would be a great novelty. We announced it, and nobody believed us ; we stuck to it, and the town believed everything we said. To know an actor personally appeared to me a vice not to be thought of, and I would as lief have taken poison as accept a ticket from the theatres.'²

'The Examiner' was a speedy consequence of the success that attended the first venture of the brothers in newspaper work, and a bold attempt to apply to the discussion of political and social affairs, in which their interest grew with age, the same independence which had appeared in Leigh Hunt's notices of the performances of Mrs. Siddons, Harriet Mellon, Kemble, Liston, Munden, and other actors and actresses. The

¹ *Autobiography of Leigh Hunt* (revised edition, with an introduction by his eldest son), p. 124.

² *Ibid.*, p. 138.

first number appeared on Sunday, January 3, 1808, with John Hunt as printer and manager, and Leigh Hunt, in his twenty-fourth year, as editor, and the two as joint-proprietors.

'The main objects of "The Examiner,"' said Leigh Hunt, '~~were to assist in producing reform in parliament, liberality of opinion in general (especially freedom from superstition), and a fusion of literary taste into all subjects whatsoever.~~ It began with being of no party, but reform soon gave it one. It disclaimed all knowledge of statistics, and the rest of its politics were rather a sentiment and a matter of general training than founded on any particular political reflection. It possessed, however, the benefit of a good deal of reading. It never wanted examples out of history and biography, or a kind of adornment from the spirit of literature ; and it gradually drew to its perusal many intelligent persons of both sexes, who would perhaps never have attended to politics under other circumstances. (In the course of its warfare with the Tories "The Examiner" was charged with Bonapartism, with republicanism, with disaffection to church and state, with conspiracy at the tables of Burdett and Cobbett and Henry Hunt. Now Sir Francis, though he was our hero, we never exchanged a word with ; and Cobbett and Henry Hunt (no relation of ours) we never beheld, never so much as saw their faces. I was never even at a public dinner, nor do I believe my brother was. We had absolutely no views whatsoever but those of a decent competence and of the public good ; and we thought, I dare affirm, a great deal more of the latter than of the former. Our competence we allowed too much to shift for itself. As for myself, what I thought of more than either was the making of verses. I did nothing for the greater part of the week but write

verses and read books. I then made a rush at my editorial duties, took a world of superfluous pains in the writing, sat up late at night, and was a very trying person to compositors and newsmen.’¹

During the first year of his editorship of ‘The Examiner’ Leigh Hunt’s time was partly filled up by his duties as a clerk in the War Office. He resigned this post, however, in December 1808, in order that, not being in the pay of the government, he might have no compunction in attacking it whenever he thought necessary;² and, though he was soon afterwards to be married, he considered that the success of the paper warranted his thus surrendering a certain income. ‘The paper gets on gloriously indeed,’ he wrote to his sweetheart in November. ‘Our regular sale is now 2,200, and by Christmas or a few weeks after I have little doubt we shall be 3,000; and what is best of all we shall now keep it to ourselves. My brother told me the other day that he had no doubt but we should be getting eight or ten guineas apiece every week in a year’s time.’³

‘The Examiner’ deserved to succeed, apart from its merits as a fearless advocate of political reform. As a mere literary production it at once took rank above all the other weekly periodicals, and contained such careful and scholarly writing as only appeared occasionally, when men like Coleridge and Mackintosh were the authors, in the best of the daily papers. Leigh Hunt was scarcely hypercritical when, in the preface to the first year’s volume of his journal, he complained of ‘the ignorance and corruption’ of its contemporaries.

¹ *Autobiography*, p. 172.

² It is somewhat curious that, more than sixty years later, another War Office clerk, not then aware that he was following in Leigh Hunt’s steps, also resigned his post in order to edit *The Examiner*.

³ *Correspondence of Leigh Hunt*, vol. i. p. 40.

'The jarring spirit of past years,' he said, 'seemed to have destroyed every political refinement, both of speaking and writing. Graceful persuasions forsook the senate, wit and argument the press. The newspapers, occupied with momentary rumour and invective, appeared to have no leisure for anything becoming; and, as the sounds of speech are affected by a deranged constitution, the whole public voice grew vulgar as it grew violent. People are now beginning to change their tone in these matters; but even now, when every other species of literature has gained at least an elegant mediocrity, the progress of periodical style has scarcely reached correctness, and it is remarkable that those papers which are the most politically corrupt are still the most corrupt in everything else. It becomes a public writer, therefore, to show the company his intellect keeps, and to attempt a language worthy of the sentiments he feels and the country for which he writes.'

This rule was loyally observed in all the original writing for which a liberal share of space was found in 'The Examiner,' and even in its careful digests of the week's news. 'Little miscellaneous sketches of character and manners,' as Hunt said, 'were introduced as one small method of habituating readers to general ideas of the age'; and, theatrical criticism being a favourite exercise with him, he made it a special feature of 'The Examiner,' this being, he remarked, 'a department which none of the papers seem inclined to dispute with a person fond of the subject, the daily ones for want of independence, and the weekly for want of care.'¹ 'As

¹ 'I remember an instance of John Hunt's high spirit relating to his paper,' says Cyrus Redding. 'John Kemble had given *The Examiner* a free admission for two persons to the boxes. Leigh Hunt was the best dramatic critic of the day. He saw it right to censure Kemble for his performance of some part—I forget which—and Kemble remarked that,

theatrical criticism,' he added, 'is the liveliest part of a newspaper, I have endeavoured to correct its usual levity by treating it philosophically ; and as political writing is the gravest subject, I have attempted to give it a more general interest by handling it good-humouredly.'¹

Among the 'little miscellaneous sketches' that Leigh Hunt published in 'The Examiner' during its first year were seven essays on Methodism and its extravagances, then making some noise in the world, and these were afterwards reissued in a small volume.² To politics it paid less attention then than afterwards, and the strengthening of this part of the paper was due, perhaps, chiefly to the influence of his brother's robuster though less literary mind. 'In politics, from old family associations,' said Leigh, 'I soon got interested as a man, though I never could love them as a writer. It was against the grain that I was encouraged to begin them, and against the grain that I ever afterwards sat down to write, except when the subject was of a very general description, and I could introduce philosophy and the *belles lettres*.'³ Before long, however, 'The Examiner' and its editor were hotly engaged in the political struggle then going on, and this notwithstanding the studied moderation, not from cowardice, but from conviction, of the language generally used. The Hunts thought they could do better service to the reforming movement, in which they took the

after sending such admissions, he should not have expected to be handled so severely. John Hunt at once enclosed the admissions to which he alluded, and stated that in future the admissions of the theatrical critic should be paid for, and charged to the weekly expenses of the paper, which should be placed on a footing of perfect independence.'—*Fifty Years' Recollections*, vol. i. p. 277.

¹ *Examiner*, preface to the volume for 1808.

² *An Attempt to show the Folly and Danger of Methodism*, 1809.

³ *Autobiography*, p. 155.

keenest interest, by dignified remonstrance and argument than by joining in the noisier agitation led by Cobbett, with whom they frequently expostulated, by Burdett, whom, when they found that their early admiration was misplaced, they nicknamed Sir Francis Bourgeois, and by others. They shunned the society of hotheaded agitators and of temporising statesmen alike, just as they avoided personal intercourse with theatrical managers and actors. "The Examiner," so to speak, lived quite alone,' said Leigh Hunt. 'It sought nobody, and its principles had already become so well understood that few sought it, and no one succeeded in making its acquaintance.'¹ This independence saved it from contamination, but not from persecution. A newspaper that could not be bought, and whose managers neither gave nor went to dinner parties, was only the more likely to be hunted down on that account.

'The Examiner' was not ten months old when, on October 23, 1808, there appeared in it an article, eight columns long, on 'Military Depravity,' commenting, not for the first time, on the gross mismanagement of the army under the Duke of York, whom it held personally responsible for scandals that were notorious, though few ventured to utter their complaints in public. 'The time has at length arrived,' it was said in 'The Examiner,' 'when either the vices of one man must be sacrificed to the military honour of the country, or the military honour of the country must be sacrificed to the vices of one man—an alternative truly monstrous and deplorable.' That was strong language, and there was more of it. The Hunts were promptly threatened with an action for libel, and the proceedings dawdled on for some time. They were discreetly abandoned, however, without appeal to a jury.²

¹ *Autobiography*, p. 200.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 200, 201.

The first serious attack on the paper was made a year later. In anticipation of the disruption of the Duke of Portland's administration, consequent on his death, and the rearrangement of its more important members under Perceval's premiership, Leigh Hunt published on October 1, 1809, a smart article entitled 'Change of Ministry.' 'It is generally supposed,' he wrote, 'that the mutilated administration, in spite of its tenacity of life, cannot exist much longer ; and the Foxites of course are beginning to rally round their leaders in order to give it the *coup de grâce*.¹ A more respectable set of men they certainly are, with more general information, more attentive to the encouragement of intellect, and altogether a more enlightened policy ; and if his majesty could be persuaded to enter into their conciliatory views with regard to Ireland, a most important and most necessary benefit would be obtained for this country. The subject of Ireland, next to the difficulty of coalition, is no doubt the great trouble in the election of his majesty's servants ; and it is this, most probably, which has given rise to the talk of a regency—a measure to which the court would never resort while it felt a possibility of acting upon its old principles. What a crowd of blessings rush upon one's mind that might be bestowed upon the country in the event of such a change ! Of all monarchs, indeed, since the Revolution, the successor of George III. will have the finest opportunity of becoming nobly popular.' The last two sentences of that mild paragraph were quoted approvingly by Perry in 'The Morning Chronicle' of October 2. The allusion

¹ It will be remembered that Fox had died in 1806, and that his followers were now scheming more than ever to effect an alliance with the Prince of Wales, shortly to be made prince regent on account of his father's madness.

in them to the possibility of a better monarch than George III. succeeding him was declared by Sir Vicary Gibbs, the attorney-general, to be a seditious libel, and proceedings were instituted against Perry and the printer of 'The Morning Chronicle,' as well as against the two Hunts as proprietors of 'The Examiner.'

The case came on before Lord Ellenborough on February 24, 1810, when Gibbs argued that 'nobody who saw such language held could doubt that it must have a manifest tendency to alienate and destroy the affections of the people towards their sovereign, and to break down that link of love which ought to connect the sovereign and his people in the tenderest ties.' Fortunately for the Hunts, Perry's name was first in the indictment. Perry conducted his own case somewhat pompously, but very skilfully, claiming for 'The Chronicle' that it stood now, as it had stood before, 'in the front of the battle, not only for itself, but for the liberty of the press in England,' and that the sole point at issue was 'whether it should continue to assert the principles upon which the Whigs had ever acted, and by which their only object was to perpetuate to his majesty and his heirs the throne to which they persuaded the people of England to call his ancestors by securing it upon that basis which forms not only its strength but its lustre.' The jury returned a verdict of not guilty, and the information against the Hunts was withdrawn, thus lessening to them the expense—which, however, was heavy—of the abortive prosecution.¹

They were again less unlucky than they might have been, just twelve months later, when they were indicted for reprinting on September 2, 1810, a vigorous article from 'The Stamford News' against flogging in the

¹ *State Trials*, vol. xxx.

army.¹ For a similar offence, Cobbett was now enduring two years' imprisonment, but the Hunts had Henry Brougham to defend them, and his forcible presentment of the views of Sir Ralph Abercromby, Sir Robert Wilson, and other great generals as to the folly of corporal punishment, together with the effective contrast he drew between the dignity and honesty of 'The Examiner,' and the licentiousness of other newspapers which were not interfered with, secured an acquittal.² Brougham was less successful when, a fortnight later, he went down to Stamford to repeat the same argu-

¹ A few sentences of this article are worth quoting (indeed, the whole would be if space allowed) as an illustration of Radical sentiment, three-quarters of a century ago, on a scandal that has only lately been removed. 'The attorney-general ought not to stroke his chin with such complacency when he refers to the manner in which Bonaparte treats his soldiers. We despise and detest those who would tell us that there is as much liberty now enjoyed in France as there is left in this country. . . . But, although we do not envy the general condition of Bonaparte's subjects, we really (and we speak the honest conviction of our hearts) see nothing peculiarly pitiable in the lot of his soldiers, when compared with that of our own. Were we called upon to make our election between the services, the whipcord would at once decide us. No advantage whatever can compensate for, or render tolerable to a mind but one degree removed from brutality, a liability to be lashed like a beast. It is idle to talk about rendering the situation of a British soldier pleasant to himself, or desirable, far less honourable in the estimation of others, while the whip is held over his head—and over his head alone; for in no other country in Europe (with the exception, perhaps, of Russia, which is yet in a state of barbarity) is the military character so degraded.'

² *Report of the Proceedings against John Hunt and Leigh Hunt* (Stamford, 1811); *State Trials*, vol. xxxi. pp. 367–414. 'That licentiousness, said Brougham, 'has of late years appeared to despise all the bounds which had once been prescribed to the attacks on private character, insomuch that there is not only no personage so important or exalted, for of that I do not complain, but no person so humble, harmless, or retired, as to escape the defamation which is daily and hourly poured forth by the venal crew to gratify the idle curiosity, or still less excusable malignity, of the public. To mark out for the indulgence of that propensity individuals retiring into the privacy of domestic life, to hunt them down, and drag them forth as a laughing-stock to the vulgar, has become in our days with some men the road even to popularity, and with multitudes the means of earning a base subsistence.'

ments on behalf of Drakard, the original printer of the article.¹

The service that Brougham thus rendered to the Hunts caused them to make in his favour an exception to their rule of not associating with prominent politicians ; and they had plenty of other friends, some of whom assisted them in filling 'The Examiner' with good articles, and also contributed to a stout quarterly magazine, 'The Reflector,' which they commenced in 1810, but of which only four numbers appeared. Among their contributors were Charles Lamb, Thomas Barnes, who afterwards became editor of 'The Times' and was now writing for it,² Dyer, and Scholefield—all old schoolfellows of Leigh Hunt's at Christ Hospital, to whom before long were added Hazlitt, Shelley, and Keats.³

'The Examiner' flourished in spite of the persecutions to which it was exposed, and partly because of them. Its conductors were able to boast that in each of its first three years it had been attacked by the government without success, and had increased its circulation and influence. 'These circumstances,' they said, 'may not be equally lucrative to the proprietors, but they are equally flattering, and alike encourage them in a line of conduct which enables them to deserve the one and to disdain the other.'⁴ In the fourth year their deserts were as great, but they had less cause for congratulation.

The Prince of Wales obtained the promotion he had long desired, and was made prince regent, on February

¹ *State Trials*, vol. xxxi. pp. 495-535.

² Leigh Hunt also occasionally wrote for *The Times* to assist his friend. *Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 28.

³ *Autobiography*, p. 192 ; Leigh Hunt in *Monthly Repository*, 1837 ; 'The Examiner' *Twenty Years Ago*.

⁴ *Examiner*, 'Postscript' to vol. iii.

3, 1811; but as, from the very commencement of his fresh authority, he gave fresh proof of his capacity for abusing it, a year sufficed to deprive him of nearly all the popularity, such as it was, that he had formerly enjoyed. At a banquet given on St. Patrick's Day, 1812, which he attended, he was received with jeers and hisses, much to his own annoyance and that of the courtiers and sycophants. 'The Morning Post' was especially indignant and especially profuse in its condolences, and one of its articles tempted Leigh Hunt to make a very contemptuous rejoinder in 'The Examiner' of March 22. 'What person acquainted with the true state of the case,' he exclaimed, 'would imagine, in making these astounding eulogies, that this "glory of the people" was the subject of millions of shrugs and reproaches! that this "protector of the arts" had named a wretched foreigner his historical painter, in disparagement or in ignorance of the merits of his own countrymen! that this "Mæcenas of the age" patronised not a deserving writer! that this "breather of eloquence" could not say a few decent extempore words—if we are to judge, at least, from what he said to his regiment on its embarkation for Portugal! that this "conqueror of hearts" was the dissembler of hopes! that this "exciter of desire" (bravo, messieurs of "The Post"!), this "Adonis in loveliness," was a corpulent man of fifty; in short, that this *delightful, blissful, wise, pleasurable, honourable, virtuous, true, and immortal* prince was a violator of his word, a libertine over head and ears in disgrace, a despiser of domestic ties, the companion of gamblers and demireps, a man who has just closed half a century without one single claim on the gratitude of his country or the respect of posterity!' That was certainly strong and plain language to use about one who was, in nearly everything but the title,

king of England, and its offensiveness was aggravated by the fact that much to the same effect, but more cautious, had appeared in 'The Examiner' during the previous twelvemonth. 'I was provoked to write the libel,' said Leigh Hunt, 'by the interest I took in the disappointments of the Irish nation, which had very particular claims on the promises of his royal highness,' and 'I wrote an attack equally grave and vehement, such as everybody said would be prosecuted.'¹

The prosecution began forthwith, but there were various delays, and the trial only came off on December 9, and sentence was not passed by Lord Ellenborough till February 3, 1813.² On that day, notwithstanding Brougham's able and eloquent conduct of their defence, John and Leigh Hunt were fined 500*l.* apiece—the costs of the trial amounting to about another 1,000*l.*—and were committed to prison for two years : John to Coldbath Fields, and Leigh to Horse-monger Lane, their separation being a malicious aggravation of the punishment, as it increased their difficulties in bringing out 'The Examiner' while they were in gaol. They continued to edit and manage the paper very satisfactorily, however, and with no lessening of its bold exposure of abuses and persistent advocacy of reforms.

All that friends could do was done to lessen the miseries of their captivity, which was in one important respect made easy for them by their full and reasonable assurance of their blamelessness. Even their gaolers befriended them, and stretched the prison rules in order to secure for them some sort of comfort. Leigh Hunt had his family to reside with him, until, for the sake of his children's health, his wife—who, he tells us, never

¹ Leigh Hunt, *Lord Byron and some of his Contemporaries*.

² *The Prince of Wales v. The Examiner: A Full Report, &c.* (1813).

once reproached him for the public zeal that caused this disturbance of their domestic happiness—took them to the seaside. Hardly a day passed without his being cheered by visitors—Charles and Mary Lamb, Barnes and other old Bluecoat schoolfellows, Shelley, Hazlitt, Byron, Moore, Cowden Clarke, Horace and James Smith, Wilkie, Haydon, Brougham, Sir John Swinburne, and a host of others. Jeremy Bentham went at least once to see him, and found him playing at battledore and shuttlecock, ‘in which he took part, and, with his usual eye to improvement, suggested an amendment in the construction of shuttlecocks.’ When his friends were not with him, and while his wife sewed and his children played beside him, he finished ‘The Story of Rimini,’ and wrote ‘The Descent of Liberty,’ and other poems, besides his weekly articles for ‘The Examiner.’

And he occupied himself in other ways. ‘I papered the wall with a trellis of roses,’ he tells us; ‘I had the ceiling coloured with clouds and sky; the barred windows were screened with Venetian blinds, and when my bookcases were set up with their busts and flowers, and a pianoforte made its appearance, perhaps there was not a handsomer room on that side the water. I took a pleasure when a stranger knocked at the door, to see him come in and stare about him. Charles Lamb declared there was no other such room except in a fairy tale. But I had another surprise, which was a garden. There was a little yard outside, railed off from another belonging to a neighbouring yard. This yard I shut in with green palings, adorned it with a trellis, bordered it with a thick bed of earth from a nursery, and even contrived to have a grass plot. The earth I filled with flowers and young trees. There was an apple tree, from which we managed to get a pudding

the second year. Here I wrote and read in fine weather, sometimes under an awning. In autumn my trellises were hung with scarlet-runners. I used to shut my eyes in my armchair, and affect to think myself hundreds of miles off.' ¹

About John Hunt, while he was in prison or out of it, we hear less than about his more famous but not worthier brother. To him, quite as much as to Leigh Hunt, were due the credit of 'The Examiner,' and, apart from the actual writing of its articles, its splendid services to the advancement both of literature and of politics, and to journalism in both those relationships.

'Philosophical, patient, just, a deep thinker, retiring, unobtrusive, sincere,' said Cyrus Redding, one of the many younger men who gathered round him, 'John Hunt, in my view, stood foremost of any character I have encountered. I used often to visit him, moved by his solid, yet attractive, conversation, his just views of things, stripping them of everything extraneous, and coming at once to the point. He suffered no consideration but truth to enter into a discussion, throwing policy to the winds, and, while allowing for collateral circumstances and their interventions, keeping their argument to its just limit. He was far in advance of his time.' ² 'He was a man of a rare stamp,' we are assured by another and a more discerning friend, Albany Fonblanque; 'an honester never breathed. His devotion to truth and justice knew no bounds; there was no peril, no suffering, he was not ready to encounter for either. With resolution and fortitude not to be surpassed, he was one of the gentlest and kindest of beings. His own sufferings were the only sufferings to which he

¹ *Autobiography*, pp. 239-244.

² *Fifty Years' Recollections*, vol. i. p. 275.

could be indifferent. His part as a reformer in the worst times was unflinching, and he held his course undauntedly when bold truths were visited with the penalties of the prison, which he knew how to face and how to endure. His way through the world was a rough one, but his constancy was even, and tribulations left him unshaken. He was at arm's length with care throughout the greater part of his life, but never mastered by it, for his goodness had a bravery in it which always bore him up. Fortune's buffets, of which he had a full share, left no bruises on him, and extorted no murmur. His faults lay on the side of tenacity and prepossession ; when he had taken up a cause or a quarrel it was hard to alter his views of the merits by fact or argument ; and he was sometimes misled by his sympathy with the weaker to fight the battle not really of the juster, but of the worsted party. Having taken the field when power was carrying every injustice with a high hand, he was apt to believe it afterwards in the wrong whenever called in question. But these errors were few, and might have been fewer still had they been less detrimental to his interest. There never was a question in John Hunt's mind as to the side to be taken in any discussion but the question of justice, which he determined to the best of his judgment, and acted upon the conclusion at all risks. He fought the battle in the front ranks when the battle was the hottest, but he passed into retirement in the very hour of victory, as if he had done nothing, and deserved nothing of the triumphant cause.' ¹

The two brothers left their prisons in February 1815, and continued the good work from which while in confinement they had refused to be debarred ; and John Hunt was again sent to gaol for two years in May 1821.

¹ *Examiner*, September 16, 1848.

In the meanwhile, and afterwards, the struggle for reform, in which 'The Examiner' took the lead among newspapers, went on. But already a mighty change from the state of things prevailing when 'The Anti-Jacobin' appeared had been brought about.

CHAPTER XII.

DURING THE REGENCY.

1811—1820.

THE trial of the Hunts in 1812 for libelling the prince regent was only a notable instance of the severity with which the law was used, all through the early years of the nineteenth century, in vain efforts on the part of the rulers of the nation to prevent newspaper criticism of their conduct. The tyrannical policy that Pitt and his subordinates had enforced with new vehemence by help of the Libel Act of 1792, the Newspaper Act of 1798, and other measures, was ruthlessly carried on by Perceval, by Lord Liverpool, and by Canning. In the three years from 1808 to 1811, no fewer than forty-two prosecutions for libel were commenced, although only twenty-six of them were brought to trial, and several, like the first two actions against the Hunts, resulted in acquittals. This unparalleled severity was admitted and even boasted of by the government when complaints were made about it by Lord Holland in the House of Peers and by Lord Folkestone in the House of Commons in March 1811, immediately after the regency had been established. 'It appears,' said Lord Folkestone, and his allegation was not denied, 'that the rule which guides these prosecutions is this, that "The Courier" and other papers which support the ministry of the day may say whatever they please with-

out fear of prosecution, whereas “The Examiner,” “The Independent Whig,” “The Statesman,” and papers that take the contrary line, are sure to be prosecuted for any expression that may be offensive to the minister.’¹

This policy, pursued towards dealers in what were called seditious tracts, and those who took part in what were called seditious meetings, as well as towards newspapers charged with sedition, had the only effect that could reasonably have been anticipated. Instead of checking, it encouraged, defiance of the government and angry resistance to the lawlessness of servile legislators and faithless custodians of law. A few agitators succumbed, as did Cobbett, who, after the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in 1817, went to America for a couple of years. ‘I do not retire,’ he said, ‘from a combat with the attorney-general, but from a combat with a dungeon, deprived of pen, ink, and paper. A combat with the attorney-general is quite unequal enough ; that, however, I would have encountered. I know too well what a trial by special jury is ; yet that, or any sort of trial, I would have stayed to face. But against the absolute power of imprisonment, without even a hearing, for time unlimited, in any gaol in the kingdom, without the use of pen, ink, and paper, and without communication with any soul but the keepers—against such a power it would have been worse than madness to attempt to strive.’² Others, like the Hunts, thought it anything but madness bravely to persevere in the strife ; and some few, like William Hone, won present as well as prospective victories. Although when Hone was charged in 1817 with parodying the church liturgy, Lord Ellenborough declared that, ‘under the authority

¹ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, vol. xix. cols. 140, 568.

² *Cobbett's Political Register*, March 28, 1817.

of the Libel Act, and still more in obedience to his conscience and his God, he pronounced this to be a most impious and profane libel,' the jury acquitted him.¹ It was an inevitable sequel, long deferred but sure, to such a struggle that reforms were secured so soon as sensible counsels prevailed and as public opinion apprehended Lord Grey's warning in 1819, before the famous Six Acts were passed, that 'the natural consequence of such a system, when once begun, was that it could not be stopped; discontents begot the necessity of force; the employment of force increased discontents; these would demand the exercise of new powers, till by degrees they would depart from all the principles of the constitution.'²

In the meanwhile, though the Radical newspapers were harried, and in some respects weakened for a time, in their acquisition of strength to be rightly used hereafter, journalism gained much from the more discreet enterprise of those adepts in the craft who, having less to fear from ministerial tyranny, had ample resources and abundant zeal for its advancement. Among the eight daily morning papers published in London in 1811, 'The Times,' though not yet the most profitable, was the most energetic, and it had a worthy rival in 'The Morning Chronicle' as the organ of the Whigs, while 'The Morning Post' and 'The Morning Herald' satisfied Tory readers—the one giving special prominence to ministerial politics, and the other to aristocratic gossip; and of the other four, 'The Public Ledger' catered for the commercial class, 'The Morning Advertiser' for the licensed victuallers, 'The British Press' for the booksellers, and 'The Day' for the auctioneers. There were also eight evening papers; but 'The Courier'

¹ *Hone's Trials.*

² *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, vol. xli. col. 50.

alone, now a recognised ministerial organ, only too cleverly conducted from a business point of view, was of much importance. The others were 'The Statesman,' which was a bolder exponent of Whig opinions than 'The Chronicle'; 'The Sun,' which was violently Tory; 'The Pilot,' a short-lived, but while it lasted a vigorous journal, which, started in 1807, made a speciality of East Indian affairs; 'The Traveller,' which in Edward Quin's hands was much more than the representative of the commercial travellers; 'The Globe,' which was practically an afternoon edition of 'The British Press'; and 'The Star' and 'The Alfred,' the latter lasting but a few years, and neither of them of any political account.

Memorable illustration of the way in which, apart from editorial or literary skill and even tact in collecting advertisements and humouring various sorts of readers, newspaper success can be obtained, was furnished by the mechanical achievements of the second John Walter on 'The Times.' His father's logographic process having been abandoned, he promptly began to seek out some better substitute for the slow and laborious mode of printing then in vogue and, instead of concerning himself about the improvement of types, paid special attention to the improvement of printing presses. As far back as 1804 Thomas Martyn, a workman in the 'Times' office, invented a self-acting press, the plan of which was so promising that Walter provided him with funds for carrying on his experiments. These, however, were costly, and perilous as well, seeing that the other printers threw every conceivable obstacle in the way, destroyed the machinery that was brought into the establishment or there constructed, and threatened the life of their comrade, whom they regarded as a traitor in their midst. Martyn appears to have been either not clever or not persevering enough to perfect

his invention, and after some years of experimenting Walter, who was still only a junior partner in the business during his father's lifetime, abandoned the project. He became his own master in 1812, however, and then promptly opened negotiations with Frederick Koenig, whose steam printing-press, first patented in 1810, had been further developed in 1811 and again in 1813. In 1814 Koenig and his friend Bauer were provided with premises adjoining the 'Times' office, and set up their machinery with all possible privacy, though amid so much opposition from the workmen, that at one time they ran away, and were in hiding for three days. At length all difficulties were overcome. 'The night on which this curious machine was first brought into use in its new abode,' we are told, 'was one of great anxiety and even alarm. The suspicious pressmen had threatened destruction to anyone whose invention might suspend their employment—"destruction to him and his traps." They were directed to wait for expected news from the continent. It was about six o'clock in the morning when Mr. Walter went into the press-room and astonished its occupants by telling them that "The Times" was already printed—by steam; that if they attempted violence there was a force ready to suppress it; but that if they were peaceable, their wages should be continued to every one of them till similar employment could be procured—a promise which was no doubt faithfully performed; and, having said so, he distributed several copies among them.'¹

'The Times' of November 29, 1814, contained this excusably pompous announcement: 'Our journal of this day presents to the public the practical result of

¹ *Times*, July 29, 1847. The story of Koenig's invention, and of Walter's share in it, is told by Dr. Smiles in his *Men of Invention and Industry*.

the greatest improvement connected with printing since the discovery of the art itself. The reader of this paragraph now holds in his hand one of the many thousand impressions of "The Times" newspaper which were taken off last night by a mechanical apparatus. A system of machinery, almost organic, has been devised and arranged, which, while it relieves the human frame of its most laborious efforts in printing, far exceeds all human powers in rapidity and despatch. That the magnitude of the invention may be justly appreciated by its effects, we shall inform the public that, after the letters are placed by the compositors and enclosed in what is called the form, little more remains for man to do than to attend upon and watch this unconscious agent in its operations. The machine is then merely supplied with paper. Itself places the form, inks it, adjusts the paper to the form newly inked, stamps the sheet, and gives it forth to the hands of the attendant, at the same time withdrawing the form for a fresh coat of ink, which itself again distributes, to meet the ensuing sheet, now advancing for impression; and the whole of these complicated acts is performed with such a velocity and simultaneousness of movement, that no less than eleven hundred sheets are impressed in one hour.'

Walter lived to see his Koenig press so improved by degrees, and partly through his own ingenuity, that he was able to print off not merely eleven hundred but nearly eight thousand copies in an hour; and other wonderful improvements, to be noted hereafter, followed in due course. The revolution that he effected, however, was immediate. He was able to get through the actual work of printing in less than a third of the time formerly required, and the whole edition of between three and four thousand copies of 'The Times' then

issued could be produced in about three hours. This enabled him to go to press much later and to publish much earlier than any of his rivals with a paying circulation, and, the process securing other economies as well, he at once obtained an immense advantage over all of them who could not afford or were not venturesome enough to follow his example. Before six years were out he had more than doubled the circulation of 'The Times,' and raised it to the pre-eminence among successful newspapers which it enjoyed for half a century.

While thus employed in increasing the commercial value of his property, he was too busy to do much editing, though for some time he reserved to himself more than a general control over its policy. He was his own editor in the years during which, as we have seen, Peter Fraser was the chief writer of what Henry Crabb Robinson called 'the flash articles which made a noise,' with Edward Sterling for his second; and after that, when Sterling was promoted to the first rank. It was Sterling who, by his forcible style of writing, only too cautious to the extent of always keeping on the popular side, or rather the side taken by the more comfortable and prosperous portion of the community, secured for 'The Times' its nickname of 'The Thunderer,' and he doubtless fully earned the salary of 2,000*l.* a year, unexampled for leader-writing in those days, which Walter cheerfully paid him. He had the reputation of being able to write best on the subjects of which he knew least. 'When he was to write,' it was said, 'it was necessary to cram him with the facts and points; but when he had once got them, he clothed his case so admirably in its garment of words that all the world—except those he hit at—were charmed.'¹

¹ Knight Hunt, vol. ii. p. 176.

The first editor of 'The Times' under Walter was Dr.—afterwards Sir John—Stoddart, who had a legal appointment in Malta between 1803 and 1807. He was a friend of Coleridge's, and like him at one time an ardent supporter of the French Revolution; but before 1810, when his connection with 'The Times' began, his opinions had changed and, adopting Burke's views, he exaggerated them. Walter made no objection to his violent writing so long as the French war lasted, and matters went smoothly from 1812, when Stoddart's editorship began, till 1815, except that he was fond of supplying more of his own articles than his employer cared for, instead of being content to seek out and revise good work from other contributors. Quarrelling commenced, however, after the battle of Waterloo, and early in 1817 Walter dispensed with his editor's services, tendering him a liberal pension.¹ Stoddart declined this, and made an arrangement with the proprietors of 'The Day,' in accordance with which, in February 1817, the title of that paper was altered to 'The Day and New Times,' and as formidable opposition as could be contrived was offered by it to 'The Times.' The title was again altered to 'The New Times' in January 1818, and much money was spent during more than a dozen years on the venture, but without success. Stoddart was too honest to be a good Tory, and too crotchety to be anything else. He made himself or his paper ridiculous by proposing 'to unite to an unshaken loyalty a pure and an honourable independence,' and professing 'an attachment as true and unconstrained as it was ardent and sincere to our great and glorious constitution.' He wearied his readers by talking of the constitution as 'a thing of permanence,

¹ Sir Richard Phillips, *Public Characters* (1823), vol. iii. p. 456; *Biographical Dictionary of Living Authors* (1816), p. 334.

susceptible indeed of continual growth in majesty and vigour, but not a subject of perpetual experiment and change.' He claimed to be a thoroughgoing anti-Jacobin, an anti-Cobbett, and the enemy of everything anti-ministerial; approving, for instance, of the recent suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act on the ground that 'the constitution among its many incomparable excellences has furnished, not ministers, nor the crown, nor any party in the state, but the state itself through its great organ the legislature, with the means of rescuing liberty together with morals and religion from the fangs of an insidious and sanguinary democracy';¹ yet he affected an impartiality and a dignity that offended the Tories as much as the Whigs. 'The New Times' therefore courted failure, and all the ponderous writing in it was wasted.

Stoddart's successor on 'The Times' was Thomas Barnes, whose connection with the paper had begun in 1807 or earlier, when he was an occasional contributor, his old schoolfellow and lifelong friend Leigh Hunt now and then assisting him.² He soon became a parliamentary reporter on the regular staff of 'The Times,' but used his leisure in writing much for other papers, in spite of the obstacles raised by his then somewhat unsteady habits. To 'The Champion,' a weekly paper, he supplied a series of smart literary criticisms, signed Strada, in 1812. 'The series,' says Cyrus Redding, who was at that time editing 'The Champion,' 'embraced most of the eminent bards, living and dead, from Campbell and Rogers, back to Milton, Shakespeare, and Spenser; but of the novelists the list was scanty, beginning and ending, if I mistake not, with Mrs. Opie and Miss Edgeworth. These papers

¹ *New Times*, January 1, 1818.

² *Correspondence of Leigh Hunt*, vol. i. p. 28.

displayed great acumen as well as a delicate taste, and, though the writer, entertaining a very decided opinion as to the merits of the different authors, expressed them with a corresponding frankness, his unfavourable verdicts were free from the rude dogmatism and scurrility that disgraced his angry ebullitions when he became "the Thunderer." As these papers excited a great deal of attention and were deemed highly advantageous to the paper, it became a matter of importance to secure their regular appearance—an object not easily attained with a writer whose habits were rarely temperate and never methodical. After several complaints of his irregularity, he himself suggested a scheme by which he might be guaranteed against future disappointment; and it proved successful. Writing materials were placed upon a table by his bedside, together with some volumes of the author he was to review, for the purposes of quotation, for he was already fully imbued with the characteristics and conversant with the works of all our great writers. At his customary hour he retired to rest, sober or not, as the case might be, leaving orders to be called at four o'clock in the morning, when he arose with a bright, clear, and vigorous intellect, and, immediately applying himself to his task, achieved it with a completeness and rapidity that few could equal, and which none, perhaps, could have surpassed. Be it recorded, to his infinite praise, that in later life he must have totally conquered all the bad habits to which I have alluded.¹ Another series of articles, racy sketches of conspicuous members of parliament, was supplied by Barnes in 1815 to 'The Examiner,' to which he was a frequent contributor under Leigh Hunt. His editorship of 'The Times' began in 1817, but can be most conveniently dealt with in a later chapter.

¹ *New Monthly Magazine.*

One of Barnes's colleagues, and afterwards his subordinate on the staff of 'The Times,' was John Payne Collier, the great Shakespeare student and antiquary, whose father, John Dyer Collier, had also been a parliamentary reporter for it from 1806 or 1807. It was he who introduced Henry Crabb Robinson to Walter in 1807. Young Collier, who took his father's place about 1809, held it for at least ten years, and his reporting got him into a scrape in 1819. On June 14 in that year Canning complained in the House of Commons that in 'The Times' Joseph Hume had been reported as having made insulting remarks about him, which Hume, when taxed with them, repudiated. Collier, whose name had been given up, was accordingly called before the bar of the house on the 15th. He apologised, but was placed under the custody of the sergeant-at-arms for a night, the house refusing the government's request that he should be committed to Newgate for an indefinite period. Next day he was discharged with a reprimand, and on payment of the fees.¹ These fees amounted to between 14*l.* and 15*l.*; but Walter, in consideration of the annoyance he had been subjected to, handed him a note for 50*l.*, bidding him keep the balance.² On this occasion, Sir James Mackintosh, always loyal to the journalistic craft to which he belonged, said 'he felt himself bound to express his opinion in favour of the generally improved character of the public press; for whatever political bias particular newspapers might have and might exercise respecting the several parties to which they were attached, he never recollected a period in which their columns exhibited more general decorum, more general ability, more exemplary abstinence from the attacks upon

¹ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, vol. xi. cols. 1138-1158, 1163-1177.

² *Henry Crabb Robinson's Diary*, vol. i. p. 330.

private life, and from those disgraceful invasions of the privacy of domestic character which were once so much indulged in.'

These remarks were not applicable to all the papers, but they were true of 'The Times,' and also of 'The Morning Chronicle.' Under James Perry's management, 'The Chronicle,' though outstripped by 'The Times,' had now been flourishing for more than a third of a century. When Perry died in 1821 the property which he had bought in 1780 for 1,500*l.* was sold for 42,000*l.*, and his profits during the last year amounted to 12,000*l.*

Keeping the general editorship in his own hands till 1817, but leaving much to able assistants, Perry assigned it in that year to Thomas Black, who, born in 1783, had begun his connection with the paper as a reporter in 1810. Black entered on his duties at an unfavourable time. An abler and a more honest man than Barnes, with whom, starting at the same date, he ran a race for eighteen years, he was for some time heavily handicapped by the superior resources of 'The Times,' and also by the growing disfavour with which the governing classes regarded the 'plain Whig principles' to which 'The Chronicle' steadily adhered, and which, denounced as revolutionary by the Tories, were considered hardly better than Toryism by the rising body of Radicals. 'The Chronicle' was seriously damaged in 1819 by its excessive denunciation of the victims of the Peterloo massacre, and in 1820 by its support of the newly-made king in his persecution of Queen Caroline.

There was no lack of skilful writing in 'The Chronicle.' Mackintosh, Brougham, and nearly all the leading Whig politicians who could write were occasional if not frequent contributors; David Ricardo

and other economists addressed letters to it;¹ and besides Thomas Campbell, as we have seen, Thomas Moore and many others wrote prose as well as verse for it. Moore's 'Epistle from Tom Cribb' appeared in September 1815, and a few days afterwards this announcement had to be made: 'We have had so many and such incessant applications for the paper which contains the exquisite *jeu d'esprit*, that we shall reprint it to-morrow.'²

But the most cultured and plentiful contributor to 'The Chronicle' at this time was William Hazlitt, who had now given up painting as a profession, and discovered that the pen was the instrument he was fittest to handle. Writing often for 'The Examiner,' and especially between January 1815 and January 1817, when he and Leigh Hunt produced in it the weekly essays entitled 'The Round Table,' he began to write political articles for 'The Chronicle' in 1813, and continued them until he found more congenial occupation as a theatrical critic and writer on art. The papers afterwards collected in 'A View of the English Stage' were selections from the admirable articles that he furnished to 'The Chronicle' between 1814 and 1817. 'His dramatic criticisms,' Talfourd aptly said, 'are more pregnant with fine thoughts than any others which ever were written; yet they are often more successful in making us forget their immediate subjects than in doing them justice. He could not, like Leigh Hunt, who gave theatrical criticism a place in modern literature, apply his powers to a detail of a performance, and

¹ The first of a series of letters, afterwards reprinted as *The High Price of Bullion a Proof of the Depreciation of Bank Notes*, by Ricardo, appeared in *The Chronicle* of September 6, 1809.

² Lord Russell, *Memoirs, Journal, and Correspondence of Thomas Moore*, vol. ii. p. 81. Several of Moore's newspaper skits in verse are printed in the collection of his works.

make it interesting by the delicacy of his touch, encrystal the cobweb intricacies of a plot with the sparkling dew of his own fancy, bid the light plume wave in the fluttering grace of his style, or "catch ere she fell the Cynthia of the minute," and fix the airy charm in lasting words. In criticism thus just and picturesque Hunt has never been approached; but Hazlitt required a more powerful impulse. He never wrote willingly, except on what was great in itself or, forming a portion of his own past being, was great to him; and when both these felicities combined in the subject, he was best of all.'¹

About the relations between Hazlitt and Perry some amusing information is given by Mary Russell Mitford. 'I was at Tavistock House,' Perry's residence, she wrote in December 1818, referring to the date of Hazlitt's articles on Kean, 'and very well remember the doleful visage with which Mr. Perry used to contemplate the long column of criticism, and how he used to execrate "the damned fellow's damned stuff" for filling up so much of the paper in the very height of the advertisement season. I shall never forget his long face. It was the only time of the day that I ever saw it long or sour. He had not the slightest suspicion that he had a man of genius in his pay, not the most remote perception of the merit of the writing, nor the slightest companionship with the author. He hired him as you hire your footman, and turned him off (with as little or less ceremony than you would use in discharging the aforesaid worthy personage) for a very masterly critique on Sir Thomas Lawrence, whom Mr. Perry, as one whom he visited and was being painted by, chose to have praised. Hazlitt's revenge was exceedingly

¹ Talfourd, *Thoughts upon the Intellectual Character of the late William Hazlitt*.

characteristic. Last winter, when his "Characters of Shakespeare" and his lectures had brought him into fashion, Mr. Perry remembered him as an old acquaintance, and asked him to dinner, and a large party to meet him, to hear him talk, and to show him off as the lion of the day. The lion came, smiled and bowed, handed Miss Bentley to the dining-room, asked Miss Perry to take wine, said once "Yes" and twice "No," and never uttered another word the whole evening. The most provoking part of this scene was that he was gracious and polite past all expression, a perfect pattern of mute elegance, a silent Lord Chesterfield; and his unlucky host had the misfortune to be very thoroughly enraged without anything to complain of.¹

A pleasanter story is told about Perry in the last year of his life. Two of his old contributors, Campbell the poet and Cyrus Redding, started 'The New Monthly Magazine,' in opposition to Sir Richard Phillips's 'Monthly Magazine,' and asked Perry to assist them. 'He flatly refused,' says Redding, 'be-

¹ *Life of Mary Russell Mitford*, edited by A. G. L'Estrange, vol. i. p. 47. It is only fair, however, to quote a kindlier reminiscence as regards Perry, which was dated twenty-five years later. 'Very many years ago,' Miss Mitford wrote in 1853, concerning Thomas Moore (vol. iii. p. 254), 'I used to see him in a house which gathered together all that was best of the great Whig party—Mr. Perry's, the editor and proprietor of *The Morning Chronicle*—a man so genial and so accomplished that even when Erskine and Romilly and Tierney and Moore were present, he was the most charming talker at his own table. I saw Mr. Moore many years afterwards,' she added, less kindly, 'at Mr. Walter's of *The Times*. Such a contrast! I am speaking of old Mr. Walter, the shyest and awkwardest of men, who could not bear to hear the slightest allusion to the journal from which he derived both his fortune and his fame. The poet had arrived with Mr. Barnes, the editor, and put his host and his introducer into an agony by talking all through dinner as frankly of *The Times* as he used to do at Mr. Perry's of *The Chronicle*. It was a most amusing scene, and I think when I enlightened him upon the subject he was very glad of the mistake he had made. "They deserve it," said he to me, "for being ashamed of what, rightly conducted, would be an honour."' "

cause "The New Monthly" was the title of another magazine, named "new" for party purposes. "Attack principles if you will—it is all well; but to take a name with the view of attacking it under such objects—it is impossible for me to approve of such an act. There is a 'New Times' started against 'The Times.' How should I like a 'New Morning Chronicle' to be brought out against me by an advantage of the law?"¹

Perry had his faults. He was a much better editor, however, more intelligent and more courteous, than more than one of his contemporaries. Alexander Chalmers, who had charge of 'The Morning Herald' for several years after Bate Dudley's retirement, was an educated man; but he appears to have thought more of his antiquarian researches than of the newspaper, which certainly was not one that a conscientious editor could mend. Both 'The Morning Herald' and 'The Morning Post' were mere panderers to the political folly and the social vice of the Tories during the corrupt years before and after George IV. was king, and with few exceptions the editors and writers employed upon them were hacks in whose excuse much might be said, as they had perhaps no other means of earning a living, if their exploits were worth chronicling at all. Nor do the other daily papers deserve much mention. 'The Courier,' the ministerial evening journal, deteriorating every year, but for a long time maintaining its circulation, at length lost ground so completely that, described as 'a paper of shifts and expedients, of bare assertions and thoughtless impudence,' it was said to 'subsist for twenty readers, clergy and gentry, who do not like to be disturbed with a reason for anything.'² 'The Sun,' with the same politics, but more disreputable, was its

¹ Cyrus Redding, *Fifty Years' Recollections*, vol. ii. p. 165.

² *Edinburgh Review*, July 1823, p. 367.

chief rival for some time.¹ A much more honest and far more ably conducted paper was 'The Statesman,' projected in 1806 by John Hunt—who, however, seems to have had no hand in its management—and edited during several years by Daniel Lovell, but much hampered by the libel prosecutions that its outspoken criticism of the Tories brought upon it. In 1817 it was heavily fined for speaking of 'the prostituted "Courier," the venerable apostate of tyranny and oppression, whose full-blown baseness and infamy held him fast to his present connections and prevented him from forming new ones.'²

In this year, 1817, an interesting innovation was made in journalism by the commencement of 'The Literary Gazette,' which was edited during several years by William Jerdan, who had previously been employed on 'The Sun,' 'The Pilot,' and some other and less respectable papers. This was not the first publication of its class, Dunton and others having anticipated it in rude ways by more than a century, and there was nearly as much literary criticism, and of better quality, in 'The Examiner' and some of the other papers; but it was a commendable experiment in what was almost a new line. It undertook to furnish, in weekly numbers of sixteen pages, for a shilling, 'a clear and instructive picture of the moral and literary improvement of the times and a complete and authentic chronological literary record for reference.' Among its contributors were George Crabbe, Barry Cornwall, Mary Russell Mitford, and Dr. Croly.³

¹ Readers curious about the seamy side of journalism two generations ago, are referred to the autobiographies of William Jerdan and John Taylor, both of whom claimed to be editing *The Sun* at the same time, and carried on their feud in public. Jerdan was by far the worthier man of the two.

² Andrews, vol. ii. p. 91.

³ *Autobiography of William Jerdan*, vol. i. pp. 175, 177, 191, 192, 236. A rival, *The Literary Chronicle*, appeared in March 1818.

Vastly superior to anything that Jerdan could produce in his weekly paper, in the way of refined criticism and literary guidance, were the contents of 'The Indicator,' which Leigh Hunt started on October 13, 1819. It was only continued through sixty-six weeks, and was even less of a newspaper than was 'The Spectator' of Steele and Addison, on which it was modelled with variations; but it was in admirable contrast to nearly all the reading provided by the weekly papers in days when ministers and their underlings did their utmost to lower the character and crush the independence of journalism, and it was full of matter that is of lasting worth. Hunt's 'indicator' was the *cuculus indicator* of Linnæus, the African honey-bird which 'indicates to honey-hunters where the nests of wild-bees are to be found,' which 'calls them with a cheerful cry, which they answer, and, on finding itself recognised, flies and hovers over a hollow tree containing the honey.'¹ That function Hunt undertook to perform for any readers who cared to follow him, believing with Spenser that 'a dram of sweet is worth a pound of sour.' With genial criticism and kindly satire, graceful reminiscences of old episodes of history and far-off fables, instructive comments on old writers like Chaucer and Shakespeare, and on new books like Shelley's 'Cenci' and Keats's 'Lamia,' and amiable gossip on present-day themes, he filled his pages. His own half-sorrowful notes will show us something of their quality. 'Let me console myself a little,' he says, 'by remembering how much Hazlitt and Lamb and others were pleased with "The Indicator."' Hazlitt's paper was the one on "Sleep;" perhaps because there is a picture in it of a sleeping despot, though he repeated, with more enthusiasm than

¹ *Indicator*, October 13, 1819.

he was accustomed to do, the conclusion about the parent and the bride. Lamb preferred the paper on "Coaches and their Horses," that on "Deaths of Little Children," and, I think, the one entitled "Thoughts and Guesses of Human Nature." Shelley took to the story of "The Fair Revenge," and the paper that was most liked by Keats, if I remember, was one on a hot summer's day, entitled "A Now." He was with me while I was writing it, and contributed one or two of the passages.¹ Keats made other contributions to 'The Indicator'; and so, probably, did other friends of Leigh Hunt's, though their help was chiefly required for 'The Examiner.'

Hazlitt gave him most help on 'The Examiner,' but the rest assisted, Shelley sending his 'Hymn to Intellectual Beauty,' for instance, in the summer of 1816, and also 'The Masque of Anarchy.' 'I did not insert it,' Hunt wrote of this latter, 'because I thought that the public at large had not become sufficiently discerning to do justice to the sincerity and kind-heartedness that walked in this flaming robe of verse.'²

Even Leigh Hunt had to pay some heed to popular prejudices when such a man as Hazlitt—with whom Hunt had a passing quarrel on the subject—sneered at Shelley as 'a philosophic fanatic';³ for 'The Examiner' was now in very low water, the circulation having fallen off, and its proprietors being sorely crippled in funds through the heavy expenses brought upon them by repeated prosecutions. They found it no easy matter to stand out against the public opinion—the opinion, that is, of those who could afford to pay the high price the heavy stamp duty rendered it

¹ *Autobiography of Leigh Hunt*, p. 249.

² Dowden, *Life of Shelley*, vol. ii. p. 280.

³ W. C. Hazlitt, *Memoir of William Hazlitt*, vol. i. p. 305.

necessary to charge for 'The Examiner'—which was aroused by such trials as those of Richard and Jane Carlile in 1819 and 1820. 'It is our honesty that has injured our paper,' Leigh Hunt wrote to Shelley in July 1821, 'particularly upon the occasion of Carlile's trial and public occurrences of a similar nature. Ours is almost the only journal that is not dotard or hypocrite on such matters.'¹ John Hunt was then undergoing his second term of two years' imprisonment; and, as Leigh was constrained to admit, 'politics different from ours were triumphing all over Europe.'² 'The Examiner,' fortunately, was not abandoned. John Hunt managed it from gaol, and Leigh, broken down in health, but encouraged to hope that by joining Shelley, Byron, and other friends in Italy he could best serve the interests he had most at heart, left his nephew, Henry Leigh Hunt, to edit the paper while he went abroad for, as it happened, nearly four years. 'It was agreed by my brother John,' he said, 'that while a struggle was made in England to reanimate "The Examiner," a simultaneous endeavour should be made in Italy to secure new aid to our prospects and new friends to the cause of liberty.'³

While English journalism in its best phase was in this gloomy state, the general aspect, as it appeared to foreigners, was tolerably bright. 'These journalists,' wrote one visitor to London in 1820, 'are no famished authors, who pawn their civil honour for a piece of gold. Most of them are possessed of considerable property, no less than 18,000*l.* being required to bring a newspaper into circulation; and their revenues, therefore, often exceed those of a minister of state. The yearly income of the proprietor of "The Morning Herald"

¹ *Correspondence of Leigh Hunt*, vol. i. p. 164.

² *Autobiography*, p. 282.

³ *Ibid.*

exceeds, as I am well assured, the sum of 8,000*l.*, and the clear profits of "The Star," I have been informed by one of its co-owners, amount to about three-fourths of that sum. The property of a paper, however, is sometimes vested in fifty different persons, who have advanced the capital requisite for this undertaking, divide the annual profits among themselves, and from their joint stock deduct a certain stipend to the writer of the paper, who is generally a respectable author. But it may easily be conceived that they proceed with great caution in appointing anyone to this office, and that they keep a strict and jealous eye over all his motions. Such a writer is under the immediate inspection of the public, of the proprietors, of the opposite party, and of his brother editors, who eagerly detect his failings and are his professional rivals. They live, indeed, in a perpetual warfare with each other : all the artifices usual with authors are devised and put in practice amongst them ; and their mutual jealousies sometimes give birth to scenes of an extraordinary nature.' ¹

The yearly returns of stamps issued by the exchequer authorities show that, while the total number of newspapers sold in 1760, when George III. ascended the throne, was only 9,464,790, it had risen to 24,424,713 in 1811, when he practically ceased to reign, and to 29,387,843 in 1820, the aggregate circulation having more than trebled in sixty years.

¹ C. A. Gottlieb Goede, *A Foreigner's Opinion of England* (1821).

CHAPTER XIII.

AFTER TWO CENTURIES.

1820.

THE year 1820 marks no crisis in newspaper history, the same policy being pursued by George IV. and his ministers during the ten years of his kingship as during the nine years in which he was regent, and the same difficulties, dangers, and degradations having after as well as before it to be met, evaded, or overcome. But this is a convenient halting-place for a brief review of the progress made by journalism throughout the period of nearly two hundred years that had now elapsed since the date that may be assigned for its commencement, and before we look at the events of the two following generations.

When Nathaniel Butter issued his 'Courant, or Weekly News' in 1621, he only made what appears to have been the first English attempt to give in serial form and at regular intervals such meagre reports of foreign affairs as had previously been given in occasional pamphlets; nor was that crude anticipation of a modern newspaper very successful. The eight small pages of 'The Courant' would fill barely more than eight pages of this volume, and its inadequate summary of news only purported to be 'taken out of the High Dutch.' Such as it was, however, it was, so far as we know, an advance from anything of the sort that preceded it, and

it was not much improved upon during the next twenty years. Original newspaper work could not be attempted till after the Star Chamber had been overthrown, and the Long Parliament had recognised, within narrow limits, the right of free speech and free writing. 'Mercurius Aulicus,' in which Birkenhead coarsely supported the cause of Charles I., who now sanctioned the use on his behalf of weapons he had not tolerated while he could dispense with them, and 'Mercurius Britannicus,' in which Nedham was too republican for the Long Parliament, were the pioneers of modern journalism, but such progress as they and others in the Commonwealth time achieved was checked when Stuart misrule was revived. Except in the case of the official organs, 'The London Gazette' and 'The Intelligencer,' which furnished merely such garbled scraps of news as were thought suitable for public reading, journalism only existed on sufferance, sickly and crippled, after the Restoration, and until the Licensing Act was allowed to lapse in 1695.

Better days began with the Revolution, and all through the eighteenth century newspaper enterprise was developed. Its progress, however, was slow and fitful. The Stamp Act, invented by the Tories as a milder instrument of tyranny than the Licensing Act, was a formidable weapon for coercion and repression in the hands both of Tories and of Whigs, and Walpole, not inventing but amplifying the device, set a fashion of bribery and corruption which was quite as degrading to the press as actual intimidation could be. This more insidious agency of debasement than any laws could create or strengthen was one that no legislation could stamp out, even if the legislators had cared to try the experiment, and the mischief has not yet been quite cured. Another dangerous weapon in the hands

of unworthy or not sufficiently wise rulers was their power of distorting the law of libel into a machine for the vindictive persecution of all whom they objected to. The Libel Act of 1792 established the right of juries to decide on the guilt or innocence of culprits brought before them, instead of their being required to accept meekly the ruling of the judges; but the full recognition of that right was only tediously obtained after persistent struggling, and even then, so long as the government of the day thought fit to institute frivolous, biassed, and oppressive prosecutions for libel, it was able, by throwing upon them heavy expenses and other obstacles in the pursuit of their calling, to inflict cruel punishments on persons whose innocence was ultimately proved. At the stage of our record which we have now reached, and for some time later, the Libel Act was made instrumental to as much injustice as had prevailed before it was passed.

The earlier newspapers pretended to give no more than bare epitomes of news, with now and then ampler details of particular events, like a great battle, or a great fire, a specially interesting scandal in courtly circles, or some alleged prodigy, like the birth of a child with four legs or two heads, among the poorer classes; and these reports, whether brief or copious, were often inaccurate through the perverseness of the reporters or the faultiness of their information. Hardly any news, however, even the baldest, could be repeated without some flavouring from the writer's opinion, and thus gradually and inevitably, as they grew larger and more plentiful, the newspapers became guides of public policy or exponents of popular prejudice, and took sides accordingly. A striking example of this is furnished by the rival newspapers of the Commonwealth period, and at a later date by the contradictory 'Posts' and

'Postboys' of Queen Anne's time. Almost from the first, moreover, journalists attempted to be critics as well as newsmongers. Sir Roger L'Estrange issued his 'Observator,' which was a weekly review, not a chronicle, in Charles II.'s reign, and Tutchin followed with another 'Observator,' of the same sort but quite different politics, under William III. Defoe, in his 'Review,' greatly developed this branch of journalism, and some others as well, and he had famous rivals and imitators in Steele and Addison, who, however, as did some of their successors, like Johnson and Goldsmith, generally preferred social and literary questions to politics, and, affecting to despise newspapers, delivered themselves either in essay sheets like 'The Spectator,' which were not newspapers, or in weekly miscellanies like 'The Universal Chronicle.' It was Defoe again, more than anyone else, who in 'Mist's Journal' and other papers made it customary to give news and elaborate comments in the same journal, and the plan was hardly improved upon till John and Leigh Hunt started 'The Examiner.' The first newspapers, being published weekly, provided nothing but such news as they could collect. When, early in the eighteenth century, daily newspapers began, they continued to provide little more than news, leaving it for the newer and generally short-lived weekly papers, either to provide essays and critical articles alone, as in the case of 'The Spectator,' 'The Connoisseur,' and some hundreds of others, or to enliven their reports of events, obtained at second hand, with a few columns of original writing, as in the case of 'Mist's,' 'Read's,' and other journals. The dailies began to usurp what was then regarded as the function of the weeklies when such letters as Junius's appeared in 'The Public Advertiser,' and before the end of George III.'s reign every paper

of importance had its leading articles, its theatrical notices, and perhaps even its reviews of books and miscellaneous essays, as well as its reports of domestic and foreign occurrences, of parliamentary debates and public meetings, for all of which much ampler space than formerly was afforded by the enlarged size of the sheets.

The steady growth of newspapers is shown, not only by their rapidly increasing numbers and frequency of publication, but also by their enlargement in size. Until the time of Queen Anne a small sheet, technically known as a half-sheet, divided into eight quarto pages, usually in double columns, was as much as a week's supply of news could fill even with the help of advertisements, and when the first daily paper was started in 1702 it was printed only on one side of the folio. These limits were accepted as sufficient by the framers of the Stamp Act in 1712, and, except that on two occasions enlargement of the sheet was allowed as a favour to compensate for the raising of the stamp duty, no paper containing more than eight quarto or four folio pages was permitted to be issued with a single stamp. The weekly papers usually preferred the quarto shape, often squeezing three columns into the page. The dailies appeared in folio, giving three, or, before the close of the eighteenth century, four long columns, chiefly of small type, in each page. 'The Times' of 1820 thus contained about eight times as much matter every day, or forty-eight times in a week, as was contained in 'The Weekly News' of 1621.

Many things of course conduced to this growth, such as the increased facilities of communication between England and foreign countries and different parts of England itself, and the improved mechanical appliances which, benefiting all classes and all movements,

had their most notable result thus far on newspaper development in John Walter's adoption of Koenig's steam printing press. But the great stimulus came from the popular demand for information and instruction, and newspapers prospered, in spite of all that ministers and courtiers could do against them, through the energy with which capable and generally honest men set themselves to meet that demand. The battle won by the managers and writers who, in 1771, made good their claim to report the proceedings of parliament was in itself of immense national advantage, and added vastly to the value of newspapers as informers of public opinion; and the enterprise lately shown by Walter, Perry, and others, in collecting special and independent reports of military events and foreign affairs in general, was the commencement of a new branch of journalism which was afterwards much extended. Skilful, discerning, and enthusiastic newspaper proprietors and editors had come to understand the great power they wielded or could wield, and for the most part they made right use of their opportunities. For a long while the same persons were generally both proprietors or part proprietors and editors, as is still sometimes the case, and often they did most of the writing themselves; but at no time, or only in seasons of exceptional misfortune, was the press without valuable assistance from great men who were not journalists by profession, or who only made journalism one of their avocations. Milton's work on Nedham's 'Mercurius Politicus,' two centuries and a third ago, may not have been considerable; but since Milton's day there has been a constant and brilliant succession of writers and thinkers, eminent in politics and literature, who have been newspaper contributors. The names of Defoe, Swift, Steele, and Addison, Fielding,

Smollett, Johnson, and Goldsmith, Bolingbroke and Burke, Churchill and Chatterton, Mackintosh and Caning, Coleridge, Lamb, Southey, Hazlitt, Shelley, and Leigh Hunt, are but twenty of those which have been before us in the previous chapters; and if most of these were men of letters more than politicians, and of divers views in politics, the number of busy politicians who found time to write in newspapers was not small.

Thus far we have concerned ourselves almost exclusively with newspapers published in London, and it would be impossible to trace in detail the history of provincial journalism. Nor is there much need for this as, till recently, the provincial press has been to a large extent a reflex and imitation of the London press. Some notes of its progress, however, may be conveniently made here.¹

Such papers as ‘*Mercurius Aulicus*,’ published while Charles I. was in Oxford, or ‘*Mercurius Hibernicus*’ issued from Bristol in 1644, and an Edinburgh edition of ‘*Mercurius Politicus*’ printed by Cromwell’s order in 1653, cannot properly be called provincial journals, and none such, in fact, could well appear except in Scotland before 1695, when the abolition of the Licensing Act removed the limitation of printing presses to twenty in London besides the two allowed for university printing in Oxford and Cambridge. There were illicit country presses, but none of a sort able to turn out a newspaper.

Scotland had its own regulations prior to the Act of Union, and a ‘*Mercurius Caledonius*’ was commenced in Edinburgh in 1660; but it appears to have lasted

¹ For most of the information given in the following pages I am indebted to Andrews, *British Journalism*, vol. i. pp. 268–326, and vol. ii. pp. 123–164, and to Mitchell’s *Newspaper Press Directory*; and in the later paragraphs to Thomas’s *History of the American Press*.

only a few months, and the first important paper was 'The Edinburgh Gazette' which James Donaldson was licensed to print in 1699. Donaldson's licence assigned to him a monopoly in Edinburgh as regards the publishing of 'an abridgment of foreign news, together with the occurrences at home'; but in 1705 his sometime partner, James Watson, obtained a licence for 'The Edinburgh Courant' notwithstanding Donaldson's protestation that 'there is no possibility of two newswriters subsisting by that employment in this place,' and that he had 'some years bygone obtained the sole privilege of publishing the news, which project was looked on as a general benefit, and has been prosecuted with so much care and diligence that by this means he made a shift to subsist himself and family, and was thereby supported under the great losses he sustained by his early zeal and affection to the government.' Not only was 'The Edinburgh Courant' allowed to continue, but in 1706 Watson started a third paper, 'The Scots Courant,' which came out thrice a week and was intended for country circulation. It is noteworthy that in February 1710 Daniel Defoe was the licensed printer of 'The Edinburgh Courant.' Defoe was at this time in Scotland on a secret mission from the Tory government to smooth over the difficulties consequent on the unpopularity in Scotland of the Act of Union, and 'The Courant' was for a while the ministerial champion in Edinburgh. By this time it had been found possible for a good many more than two newswriters to subsist in the Scottish capital. 'The Edinburgh Flying Post' was commenced in 1708, 'The Scots Postman' in 1709, and 'The Northern Tatler' in 1710; and 'The Edinburgh Evening Courant' followed in 1718, and 'The Caledonian Mercury' in 1720. Others were afterwards started, and some of

these early papers did not live long ; but both ‘The Edinburgh Gazette,’ as a counterpart to ‘The London Gazette,’ and ‘The Edinburgh Courant’ still exist. ‘The Glasgow Courant,’ founded in 1715, was less fortunate than ‘The Glasgow Journal,’ which lasted for a century and a half from 1729, while ‘The Glasgow Herald,’ started in 1782, is still a flourishing paper. In other parts of Scotland there was not much newspaper enterprise in the eighteenth century. Only three Scotch journals were published in 1745, and the number was but thirteen in 1795. It had risen to thirty-one by 1820.

The earliest English country paper was ‘The Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury,’ started in 1695, as soon as the law allowed. The next to appear was ‘The Norwich Postman,’ offered in 1706 for ‘a penny, but a halfpenny not refused’ ; and it was followed in 1714 by ‘The Norwich Courant,’ on which Cave, of ‘The Gentleman’s Magazine,’ learnt the trades of printing, writing, and editing, in 1720 by ‘The Norwich Mercury,’ in 1721 by ‘The Norwich Gazette,’ and in 1723 by ‘The Norwich Journal.’ No other town of such size was so well supplied at this time as Norwich ; but already there were several prosperous country papers, some of which have either kept alive as weeklies to this day or been altered into daily publications. ‘Berrow’s Worcester Journal’ dates from 1709,¹ and ‘The Newcastle Courant’ from 1711. ‘The Liverpool Courant’ appeared in 1712, in which year an early number announced the arrival of one ship and the departure of one other, and contained two advertisements, one of which was from ‘a governess or female teacher’ who, besides giving instruction in reading,

¹ It claims to have been started in 1690, but not apparently on good evidence.

'learneth young gentlewomen to mark, work, point, make plain work, flourishing, embroidery, and dressing of heads after the newest modes and to the best advantage.' This paper had short life in the ecclesiastical village by the sea which Liverpool then was, and a fresh start was made in 1756 by 'The Liverpool Advertiser' on the ground that 'it hath long time been a matter of surprise to many that a place so respectable in its inhabitants, so advantageous in its situation, and so important in its commercial concerns, should be without those weekly and public methods of conveying intelligence which are to be found in towns of less considerable note.' Manchester was without a newspaper till 1730 when 'The Manchester Gazette' was started, but 'The Leeds Mercury' was begun in 1718. It is noteworthy that the country towns which showed most newspaper enterprise in the early part of the eighteenth century were those which have long since been surpassed as centres of activity. York had its 'Mercury' and Salisbury its 'Postman' in 1715, Exeter its 'Mercury,' its 'Protestant Mercury,' and its 'Postmaster or Royal Mercury' in 1718, Northampton its 'Mercury' in 1720, Chester its 'Courant' in 1721, and Gloucester its 'Journal' in 1722. It was to the last-named paper that Cave sent his parliamentary reports for which he was reprimanded by the House of Commons in 1728. Reading had its 'Mercury' in 1723, Chelmsford its 'Chronicle' in 1730, Derby its 'Mercury' in 1732, Sherborne its 'Mercury' in 1736, Hereford its 'Times' in 1739, Ipswich its 'Journal' in 1739, all before 1741 when Aris commenced his 'Birmingham Gazette.' Some of these small weekly papers, however, found it difficult to fill their columns. For lack of fresher matter 'The Leicester Journal' in 1752 reprinted by instalments the Book of Genesis.

Country newspapers began to be plentiful towards the end of the eighteenth century. Without reckoning those which had appeared and disappeared in the interval, there were fifty in 1782, sixty in 1790, and seventy-two in 1795; and while most of them were merely collections of local gossip, eked out with news taken from the London papers, and advertising mediums, some were ably conducted. James Montgomery, once highly esteemed as a poet, became editor and part proprietor of 'The Sheffield Iris' in 1794, and conducted it for more than thirty years; and the Baines's made their family and their paper prosperous by their management of 'The Leeds Mercury.' Most of these papers were Tory in politics, under such guidance from the government as has already been described; but the fate of Drakard, of 'The Stamford News'—which has also been referred to—shows that on occasion they could be as outspoken in their Radicalism as their London exemplars. Many, being issued only once a week, and making no attempt at giving much criticism or any early news that was not local, were edited in London by metropolitan journalists with time to spare. 'It was better and more congenial employment,' says Jerdan, 'to edit provincial newspapers in London, which, absurd as it may seem at first sight, is just as effective (with a sub-editor on the spot for the local news &c.) as if the writer resided at the place of publication; for the political intelligence had to come from town to be handled in the country, and it was quite as easy and expeditious to have the news and the commentaries sent down together. I edited "The Sheffield Mercury" for a number of years, and at other times a Birmingham, a Staffordshire Potteries, and an Irish journal, and others in various parts of the country.' ¹

¹ *Autobiography*, vol. i. p. 110.

There were fifty-six Irish newspapers in 1820, and thirty-five in 1795, but only three in 1782. A daily paper, 'Pue's Occurrences,' was started in Dublin in 1700, and another, 'Falkener's Journal,' in 1728; but though 'The Belfast Newsletter' began in 1737, the first important publication was 'Esdaile's Newsletter,' afterwards called 'Saunders's Newsletter,' dating from 1745. It had a formidable rival in 'The Freeman's Journal,' which in 1755 appeared as the organ of the United Irish party, and had Grattan and Flood amongst its contributors, under the editorship of Dr. Lucas. Several papers were started with special objects, to be dropped in a few years, and for a long time no journalistic champion of the English government dared appear. In 1780 a staff of writers, compositors, and printers, with a press and types, were sent from London to Dublin, there to commence 'The Volunteer Evening Post'; and when it started it purported to be in sympathy with the Irish people. Presently, however, its true policy began to show itself, and thereupon the office was attacked by a mob, the editor put to flight, and the publication stopped. Of the thirty-five papers issued in 1795 every one was anti-English, prominent among them being 'The Press,' edited by Arthur Young, with help from Emmett, Addis, and others, in which Tom Moore, when a youth of eighteen, made his first appearance as a writer.¹ Another was 'The Union Star,' from which Pitt's horrified supporters quoted such sentences as this: 'Let the indignation of men be raised against the impious wretch who profanely assumes the title of reigning by the grace of God, and impudently tells the world he can do no wrong'; and this, addressed to 'the noble and venerated name of Brutus': 'Yes, prince of assassins! thus we defend assassination, and clear it

¹ Lord Russell, *Memoirs &c. of Thomas Moore*, vol. i. p. 55.

from the rubbish of ignorance and falsehoods of despotism, which were too often successful in confounding the characters of the man who destroyed a tyrant and him who, to gratify private revenge, or urged by avarice, might sell himself to murder an innocent fellow-creature.’¹

The tone of the Irish papers was somewhat altered after the Union, but as much through the lavish bribery resorted to by the government as from any change in the sentiments of the people. In 1811 upwards of 12,000*l.* was spent, ostensibly in payments for the insertion of government announcements in loyal papers, besides other subsidies less openly granted and charged for. To one Dublin paper alone in 1819 an average of 10*l.* a week was paid in consideration of its reprinting portions of ‘The London Gazette.’ Irish newspaper editing was as profitable as it was worthless in those days, and the only newspapers in any way representing the feeling of the Irish people were those rich enough to pay their own way and courageous enough to brave the prosecutions that, rarely entered upon before 1800, were now proportionately as numerous in Ireland as in England.

Scotland fared better during the first two decades of the nineteenth century, the nearest approach to bribery there attempted, with one exception, being the creation of a sinecure for Dugald Stewart in 1806, when he was appointed printer of ‘The Edinburgh Gazette,’ with a salary of 300*l.* a year and the profits. This small job, quite excusable under the conditions of the time, was perpetrated by the Whigs during their brief tenure of office. The other case of bribery occurred in 1820, when money was found by the government for starting ‘The Beacon,’ intended to convert the Scottish Whigs

¹ John Gifford, *Life of Pitt*, vol. iii. p. 244.

or Radicals to Toryism, and Sir Walter Scott was concerned in the speculation. But it only lasted about eight months, failing, it is said, through its intemperate writers being allowed to publish whatever they chose without editorial control. 'I endeavoured in vain,' wrote John Wilson Croker, 'to impress on them the necessity of having an editor who was really up to the business, and could mix spirit with discretion—one of those "gentlemen of the press" who understand the exact length to which they can go in their vocation.' In Edinburgh, where 'The Edinburgh Review' was commenced, in 1802, there was no dearth of Whig talent to help the northern newspapers, of which the foremost, after 1817, was 'The Scotsman,' started in that year by Charles Maclaren, and edited by him for thirty years, with the exception of two, during which his place was taken by John Ramsay McCulloch.

The history of the American press during the years before the United States were separated from Great Britain is interesting and instructive. It dates from 1704, when 'The Boston Newsletter' was commenced by John Campbell as a retailer of European and local news, and an advertisement sheet for the benefit of 'all persons who have houses, lands, farms, tenements, ships, goods, wares, merchandise, &c., to be sold or let, or servants run away, or goods stolen or lost.' After two years Campbell had to inform his readers that he was losing money by his speculation 'for the good of the public,' and in 1715 he announced that 'if he received a suitable encouragement, either under the form of a salary, or by a sufficient number of subscribers who would engage for the entire year, he would give a sheet a week to circulate the news; but in the absence of one or other of these encouragements, he is reduced to do the best he can.' The best he could do was during

1719 to issue a whole instead of a half sheet every alternate week in the hope of clearing up the arrears of European news, which it was his plan to give in the order of date as far as space permitted, keeping back from week to week so much as there was not room for. 'In January last,' he wrote at the end of 1719, 'we were thirteen months behind with the foreign news, and now we are less than five months, so that we have retrieved about eight months, and anyone that has "The Newsletter" to January next (life permitted) will be accommodated with all the news from Europe needful to be known in these parts.' The Bostonians preferred to have their news somewhat less than thirteen or even five months after date, and in 1719 'The Boston Gazette' was started in rivalry to Campbell's laggard paper. 'The Boston Gazette' was at first printed by James Franklin, Benjamin Franklin's elder brother, and when the work was taken from him in 1721 he set up a third paper, 'The New England Courant,' Benjamin, who was then fifteen, being one of his apprentices.

'The Courant' was a bold journal, containing humorous and satirical essays in imitation of Steele and Addison, and in these the domineering puritans were roughly handled, being called in one article 'the club of the devils of hell.' An angry war consequently arose, 'The Gazette' taking the side of the orthodox, with the venerable Increase Mather at their head, and it extended beyond theological ground, or what other than the puritans, who viewed everything in a theological light, would have thought such. One quarrel, at its height in January 1722, was as to the propriety of inoculating for small-pox, which 'The Courant' opposed and the puritans insisted upon. 'For myself, who have seen New England from its commencement,' Mather wrote in 'The Gazette' concerning an article in 'The

Courant,' 'I cannot but be confounded with the degradation of this land. I remember the time when the civil government would have taken efficacious measures to suppress such an accursed pamphlet as that. If stern measures are not taken, I have great fear that some terrible judgment will weigh upon the country, which the anger of God will not suffer to be relieved, and for which there will be no cure. I cannot forbear taking pity upon young Franklin. He is young yet, but perhaps he may soon have to appear before the judgment seat of God, and what excuse will he give then for having printed such base and abominable things? And I ought in conscience to invite the subscribers of "The Courant" to reflect upon the consequences of being accomplices in the crimes of others, and no longer to support this journal of perdition.'

James Franklin gave worse offence afterwards, and, after being more than once reprimanded, he was tried and adjudged guilty of blasphemy for having printed an article in which it was said that 'too much religion is worse than none at all,' that 'the world abounds with knaves and villains, but of all knaves the religious knave is the worst, and villanies acted under the cloak of religion the most execrable,' and that 'the whole country suffers for the villainies of such wolves in sheep's clothing, and we are all represented as a pack of knaves and hypocrites for their sakes.' He was forbidden to continue 'The Courant'—certainly a milder punishment than he would have received from an English court; but his brother Benjamin was now old enough to take his place, and the paper was carried on till 1727, when Benjamin left Boston. James then migrated to another colony, and conducted 'The Rhode Island Gazette' from 1732 until his death in 1735. Several other papers gradually sprang up in Boston,

and the quarrel with the puritans was maintained, until all parties in the town combined to make it the headquarters of opposition to English tyranny. Samuel Andrews, whose brother John was the second president of the United States, edited 'The Independent Advertiser,' which was a pioneer of revolt in 1748, and, when that was suppressed, a new 'Boston Gazette.'

In the same year as the original 'Boston Gazette,' 1719, Philadelphia had its first paper, 'The American Weekly Miscellany,' which was superseded in 1728 by 'The Pennsylvania Gazette,' projected by Benjamin Franklin, but not edited by him till the following year. This paper soon became a valuable property, and, being allowed to be sent post free throughout the colony, an influential organ of the local government. Others followed in various parts of the new country, among them, in 1736, 'The Virginia Gazette,' in defiance of the opinions of its old governor, Sir William Berkeley, who two generations before had exclaimed, 'Thanks be to God, we have here neither free schools nor printing presses, and I hope we may not have any for a hundred years; for education has sent into the world doubt, heresy, and sectarianism, and the printing press has propagated, in addition to all these evils, attacks against governments.'

Berkeley's judgment was as correct in one respect as it was faulty in another. The English adventurers and exiles who colonised America took with them all the experience they and their forefathers had painfully acquired in the mother country, and, quickly rivalling their kinsmen at home in newspaper enterprise, soon surpassed them. Of the English-American papers established, or begun and speedily abandoned, during the first half of the eighteenth century, all but a few were, as might be expected, inferior to the humblest of their English

contemporaries ; but two or three decades sufficed to give them, or their successors, dignity and authority, and they played a very important part indeed in the war of independence. The fight was bravely carried on, for instance, by skilful writers in the loyal 'Massachusetts Gazette' and in the republican 'Boston Gazette,' and, if the final and inevitable appeal to arms was hastened on by such encounters with the pen, the right side was only thereby enabled to win its certain victory more promptly and with less bloodshed.

England was not wise enough, or it was too much hampered by feudal traditions, aristocratic prejudices and oligarchic burdens, to shake off the chains as easily and effectually as its American offshoot ; but long after the United States had taken an independent place among the nations of the world, and could boast with reason of its newspaper progress, as well as of its other successes, English journalists, still struggling desperately for the rights of free speech, were able to look across the Atlantic for encouragement, and even for guidance.

William Cobbett, who had unique experience as an English journalist in the newly-established United States, vainly propounding to its citizens the virtues of monarchism and the duty of renewing allegiance to the British Crown, soon came back as an avowed enemy of the republican institutions which gave no sanction to his bluster ; but his enmity was speedily abandoned after further acquaintance with the aristocratic and oligarchic system he had applauded from a distance, and he developed into a noisy agitator for many of the reforms that worthier men insisted upon less violently. If he brought with him some of the worst habits and methods of the young American journalism, however, he was not on that account less important, or less representative of the rowdyism necessarily

incident to such revolutionary work as he favoured and usefully helped on. It was the fault, not of Cobbett and those who sided with him, but of the mischief-makers in office whom they opposed, that the revolution had to be effected with rough as well as with polished weapons, by disorderly and unreasonable as well as by orderly and reasonable reformers. Happily for the political and social progress of England during the past two generations, and for the growth of journalism as an essential part of that progress, they had promoters not only of the coarser, but also of the finer sort.

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

[April, 1887,



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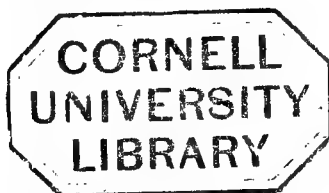
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ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS

CHAPTER XIV.

UNDER GEORGE IV.

1820—1830.

AS George IV. was virtually king during the nine years of his regency, his assumption of the title brought with it less apparent alteration in the state of public affairs than had been incident to any previous shifting of sovereigns. The actual change, however, was great. Fifty months before, the peace of Paris had formally concluded the long period of warfare which, confusing and desolating all Europe, had brought grievous trouble upon England, and, though those fifty months were not sufficient for even a pretence of restoring order and repairing the evils that had been brought on the nation, something had been done in them to tighten the bonds of tyranny which the nation was not yet able to burst. George IV., who had played upon the Whigs, or allowed them to play with him before he was regent, had come before he was king to be in close alliance with the Tories, or at any rate with the most genuine and thoroughgoing among them. Matters seemed ripe, when his father died, for a Tory supremacy in some respects more complete than

had hitherto been known, and only the more galling because it was resisted with a growing force which, as it happened, was in little more than a decade to be strong enough to overturn it. There was a constant struggle going on throughout the ten and a half years of this reign, in each stage of which newspapers performed important, if inharmonious, functions, and it ended in a crisis to which newspapers largely contributed.

Lord Liverpool, being in office nearly eight years before the new reign began, had made full use of his opportunities for the repression of public opinion in all ways, and notably in crippling and harassing such liberties as the press had already in theory acquired. New laws had been sanctioned by a too compliant parliament, and old laws had been perverted by a servile judiciary. New methods of corruption and intimidation had been adopted when the old methods were obsolete or ineffective, and if King George III. and his ministers could have had their way they would have had no journals printed which were not abject supporters of their policy, propounding lies instead of facts, quibbles instead of arguments, and fulsome adulation of the court and government, and gross abuse of all who opposed them, instead of criticism. Continuance of the same policy was aimed at by the king and his ministers, and it answered in some respects for a while, but in the main it utterly broke down before the decade was over.

Striking evidence both of the strength and of the weakness of journalism at this time, and of the incapacity of court and courtiers, with all their terrorism and all their wiles, to make the newspapers subservient, or, when they were subservient, in any way useful to them, arose out of the question which through more than the first year of George IV.'s reign was of absorbing interest to the public. Business of vastly

greater moment and evils with much more poison in them were forgotten or ignored by most people in their angry partisanship over the long-standing quarrel between the king and his wife, which broke out with fresh violence in consequence of Queen Caroline's returning to England after six years' absence to claim her rank as royal consort, or, if that was refused, to meet the charges brought against her. Her past as well as her present troubles were partly due to her own very unwise action ; but she was at any rate the lesser offender and the greater sufferer of the two, and when she set up the rival court at Brandenburgh House, which was an object of ridicule and abuse to all the king's supporters, and a centre of agitation for all who sided with her, these latter included a great many more than the Radicals, who were most outspoken in their sympathy. The official Tories, with the exception of Canning, took the king's part, but grudgingly, and with full knowledge that his reckless injustice could only bring further discredit upon him. Canning's picture of 'a government brought into contempt and detestation, a kingdom thrown into such ferment and convulsion as no other kingdom or government ever recovered from without a revolution,'¹ was only exaggeration of the truth. 'I think no administration with any regard for him,' even Lord Eldon wrote concerning the king in June 1820, 'will go the length he wishes, as an administration, and if they will, they cannot take parliament along with them ; that body is afraid of disclosures, not on one side only, which may affect the monarchy itself.'² But Eldon's warning was not heeded. Lord Liverpool brought in his Bill of Pains and Penalties in July, with a view of obtaining a

¹ Stapleton, *Life of Canning*, p. 299.

² Twiss, *Life of Lord Eldon*, vol. ii. p. 372.

divorce for the king, and depriving the queen of her rights and privileges ; but Caroline was so ably defended by Brougham and Denman that, though the bill obtained a third reading by a majority of nine in the House of Peers, the government did not venture upon proposing it to the Commons, and the measure was abandoned in November ; to be followed, however, by further insults and outrages, until the luckless and not too deserving lady died of chagrin and despair in August 1821. In October 1820 fashionable people, like the Dowager Lady Vernon, had hoped that 'the delightful queen' would be 'disgusted sufficiently' by the outrages and insults already offered to her, and would soon leave England. 'But,' added this polite lady, 'the Radical party will not suffer her to depart till a little more mischief is completed. This will be cooked up before the parliament meet for business, and I have no doubt is now cooking. "The Times" are giving a strong helping hand, no doubt.'¹

'The Times,' though for the most part a ministerial organ, and prompted perhaps rather by a business-like desire to move with the current of public opinion, for which it was already conspicuous, than by any worthier motive, was vigorous and persistent in its opposition to the king and the government all through their proceedings against Queen Caroline ; and, strange as it may seem, 'The Morning Chronicle' was almost the only respectable and responsible newspaper that did not take the same line. 'The Chronicle' was now edited by John Black, who, as we shall presently see, was too much of a philosopher and too anxious to distribute even-handed justice to be diverted by popular clamour or fickle sentiment from that pursuit of serious reforms and that exposure of vital abuses to which he had

¹ *The Journal of Mary Frampton*, p. 318.

pledged himself and his journal. But such slighting of Queen Caroline's woes as 'The Chronicle' seemed to be guilty of, while it offended the public, yielded no satisfaction to King George and his courtiers, and it was to counteract the tide of newspaper sympathy with the royal victim that 'John Bull' was started.

The story of this newspaper's origin and early progress is as curious and instructive as it is ugly and amusing. Theodore Hook had lately returned in disgrace from Mauritius, and was looking out for some way in which he could make use of his venomous and witty pen, when the Queen Caroline agitation began, and when the king's partisans were impressed with the necessity of doing something to oppose it. It was by Sir Walter Scott, one of the most ardent of these partisans, that Hook was selected, we are told, 'as a fit and proper person to make the thunder and direct the storm that were to blast the budding hopes of Radicalism.' Hook and some others, accordingly, took counsel with the courtiers, and arrangements were made to establish a paper 'in which a thorough sifting of, and investigation into, the life and position of every individual who appeared in the queen's society should be published, and every flaw in the reputation, every weak point in the family history of her adherents, duly brought to light.'¹ A nominal editor was appointed, at a salary of three guineas a week, to correct the proofs and act as 'legal lightning conductor to the concern,' and a man, named Shackell, was induced to run the risk of issuing the offensive sheet, on condition of his sharing the profits with Hook. Both risk and profits were considerable.

The first number of 'John Bull' appeared on December 17, 1820. Only 750 copies were at first issued,

¹ Barham, *Life of Theodore Hook* (1853 edition), pp. 140, 142.

as no more than that quantity of stamped paper had been procured; but a second edition was speedily called for, and the type was kept standing to meet the great demand. In the sixth week the circulation amounted to 10,000. The new paper took the fancy of scandal-loving people with money to spare; and Theodore Hook is entitled to all the credit attaching to the projector and continuator of such an obnoxious undertaking. As his biographer and panegyrist says, with some effrontery, 'any man reckless of legal consequences or beyond their reach, familiar with the current scandal of the day, and having so powerful an engine as a public paper at his disposal, may inflict a vast amount of injury upon his adversaries; but to these conditions, in the present case may be added powers, if not of the very highest order, doubtless the best adapted to the purpose, sources of information peculiar and inexplicable, a singleness of purpose and firm conviction of its justice, that combined to render "Bull" the most formidable antagonist that had as yet entered the lists against the queen.'¹ King George IV. told John Wilson Croker in January 1822, that 'neither he nor his ministers, nor his parliament, nor his courts of justice, all together, had done so much good as "John Bull."'²

Parliament and the courts of justice, servile as they then were, fell foul of 'John Bull.' In May 1821, Henry Gray Bennett complained in the House of Commons of a breach of privilege it had committed in printing disparaging remarks about him, and the printer and nominal editor were committed to Newgate, where they were detained for two months.³ In the following November, the two publishers were fined 500*l.* a piece in the King's Bench Court, for libelling Lady Caroline

¹ Barham, pp. 142-45.

² *Croker Papers*, vol. i. p. 246.

³ *Hansard's Debates*, 1821, cols. 549, 589, 633, 656.

Wrottesley ; and during 1822 there were three other libel cases in the same court, each resulting in a heavy fine, and one in three months' imprisonment as well.¹

These various punishments fell on his associates, not on Hook. His name was carefully kept out of the list of persons responsible for the paper, and, though his connection with it was well known, he arranged that it could not be proved. When one day Sir Walter Scott, who was sponsor to 'John Bull,' incautiously said that no one but Theodore Hook could turn out such clever articles as appeared in it, Hook wrote in assumed indignation to contradict the insinuation, and added to his signed letter this unsigned paragraph : 'The conceit of some people is amusing, and it has not been unfrequently remarked that conceit is in abundance where talent is most scarce. Our readers will see that we have received a letter from Mr. Hook disowning and disavowing all connection with this paper. Partly out of good nature, and partly from an anxiety to show the gentleman how little desirous we are to be associated with him, we have made a declaration which will doubtless be quite satisfactory to his morbid sensibility and affected squeamishness. We are free to confess that two things surprise us in this business ; the first, that anything we have thought worthy of giving to the public should have been mistaken for Mr. Hook's ; and, secondly, that such a person as Mr. Hook should think himself disgraced by a connection with "John Bull."' The mystification was carried on next week. 'We have received Mr. Hook's second letter,' it was then said. 'We are ready to confess that we may have appeared to treat him too unceremoniously ; but we will put it to his own feelings whether the terms of his denial were not in some degree calculated to produce a

¹ Andrews, *British Journalism*, vol. ii. pp. 108, 109.

little asperity on our part. We shall never be ashamed, however, to do justice, and we readily declare that we meant no kind of imputation on Mr. Hook's personal character.'¹

That impudent dishonesty was in keeping with the whole character of 'John Bull.' It was clever in its way, full of scurrilous jokes, cruel slanders, and elaborate falsehoods and falsifications skilfully kept up; and it was none the less successful—its profits being estimated for some years at 4,000*l.* a year, after deducting the heavy fines and law expenses incurred—because many were of the same opinion as Sir Robert Ferguson, who in the House of Commons described it as 'a stain on the public press of the country, a most malicious, false, and rascally publication.' When the special business for which it was started, the vilification of Queen Caroline and her cause, was out of date, Hook found other game to hunt. For a long while Joseph Hume, who took the lead in calling for inquiry into Hook's Mauritius defalcations, was a special object of attack. Hook provided him with a motto, 'Graiis expers catenis,' which he translated, 'I have got rid of my Greek bonds,' and made numberless jokes upon his name and his characteristics as a financial and political reformer. The true rendering of Horace's 'Ne quis Hum-asse velit,' Hook said, was 'Let no man call Hume an ass,' and 'Humili modo loqui' was translated as 'To talk Scotch like Hume.' Hook provided his enemy with verses like these to sing:—

I hastened my genius to show
Though I dealt not in figures of speech;
But speaking of figures, we know,
Is ever in Maberly's reach.²

¹ Barham, p. 153.

² Maberly was a mild precursor of Joseph Hume as a financial reformer.

And 'tis O, what did become o' me?
 O, what did I do?
 I proved, with a great deal of mummery,
 One and one to be equal to two,
 Wo, wo, wo, &c.

I wish I had stuck to my text,
 My fame had continued alive;
 But alas! I grew bold and tried next
 To prove two and two to make five.
 And 'tis O, what did become 'o me?
 O, what did I do?
 I swore it, and Walter and Finnerty¹
 Promised to bluster it through,
 Ough, ough, ough, &c.²

Hook appears to have done most of the original writing for 'John Bull' during the first year or two, and he wrote in it some things that are still readable, like 'The Ramsbottom Letters,' which were published at intervals between 1823 and 1828. He continued to write occasionally and to draw his half profits till his death in 1841, but more work was done by others after he had been sent to prison for his Mauritius frauds in 1823. At about this time Richard Harris Barham, best known as Thomas Ingoldsby, who did not think it out of keeping with his minor canonry of St. Paul's, began to write much for the paper. His chief assistant was Thomas Haynes Bayley, help coming now and then from James Smith, of the 'Rejected Addresses,' and other wits, and more sober articles being contributed by Hook's elder brother John, who, as Fitz-Harding, addressed a series of letters to contemporary statesmen, and perhaps by his younger brother Walter Farquhar, famous afterwards as a church historian. William Maginn, who was brought over from Dublin to edit, at a salary of 20*l.* a month, a Wednesday companion to

¹ Peter Finnerty was at this time chief reporter on the staff of *The Morning Chronicle*.

² Barham, pp. 165, 166.

'John Bull,' which Theodore Hook projected but did not produce, also wrote a little for the Sunday paper.¹

While 'John Bull' was not allowed by juries and some of the persons it libelled to go scot-free, the anti-ministerial papers were far more severely and frequently punished for much milder offences, or for plain speech which was only offensive because it was honest and patriotic. It was John Hunt's condemnation and imprisonment for two years in May 1821, that caused a crisis in the affairs of 'The Examiner,' and led to its passing into the hands of the Reverend Dr. Fellowes—a wealthy, enthusiastic, and noble-hearted Radical, who had for some time been a sort of secretary to Queen Caroline²—and its temporary deterioration under the too youthful editorship of Henry Leigh Hunt.

The other Radical papers were assailed in every way, and, as though Lord Liverpool's government was not zealous enough in its persecutions, a society of extreme Tories, including forty peers and church dignitaries, and calling itself the Constitutional Association, but known by others as the Bridge Street gang, was formed in March 1821 to secure enforcement of the law against all who ventured to question the wisdom of George IV. and his ministers. It was approved by the king, who had written in the previous January to Lord Eldon:—'As the courts of law will now be open within a few days, I am desirous to know the decision that has been taken by the attorney-general upon the mode in which all the vendors of treason and libellers are to be prosecuted. This is a measure so vitally indispensable to my feelings, as well as to the country, that I must insist that no further loss of time should be suffered to lapse before proceedings be insti-

¹ Barham, pp. 159–162.

² E. B. de Fonblanque, *Life and Labours of Albany Fonblanque*, p. 27.

tuted.¹ The angry complaints of Whig politicians in and out of Parliament, however, and the evidence brought forward that its members, when not themselves jurymen, were tampering with juries and officials, soon broke up the Bridge Street gang. In July it was itself prosecuted for extortion and oppression, and, though there was no conviction in this case, it ceased to be mischievous as a body.² Quite enough mischief was done by its members as individuals, and by the duly constituted authorities, to satisfy even George IV.

The opponents of the government found some amusement in a small attack upon it with its own weapons in February 1821, when Sir John Newport called attention in the House of Commons to a breach of privilege committed by 'The London Gazette,' in stating that among the petitions presented to the king was one from a Dumfries presbytery complaining of 'the violent and unconstitutional speeches of the opposition in both houses of parliament, and the infamous scurrility and misrepresentations of a licentious press.' The plea that this was only a record of a petition made in the ordinary course was rebutted by showing that the particulars had been picked out for publication, while the details of other petitions were not given, and Lord Castlereagh had to apologise for the misconduct of the official newspaper. He retaliated in March by causing complaint to be made against 'The Morning Chronicle' for having printed the names of members who had supported a motion for the reception of a petition from a prisoner against the judge who tried him, with this heading :—'The list of the minority who voted against Lord Castlereagh's admonition to the people of England

¹ *Court and Cabinets of George IV.*, vol. i. p. 107.

² *Annual Register* (1821), p. 205 ; *Hansard*, 1821, cols. 891, 1046, 1487-91 ; Knight Hunt, vol. ii. pp. 69, 70.

not to trouble and take up the time of the House of Commons with their petitions.' Of this mild sarcasm Lord Castlereagh declared that 'certainly a more detestable and wicked libel had never been published,' but after a long debate the government had to submit to the insult it had brought on itself.¹

The more powerful papers, like 'The Morning Chronicle,' only gained by the contemptible efforts of the king and his ministers to interfere with them. They had much to contend against, however, and 'The Chronicle,' which was at this time the boldest and worthiest of them, suffered for its honesty. It had been edited since 1817 by John Black, who, however, had only partial control over it until 1821, when, on James Perry's death, it was sold to William Clement, who was already proprietor of 'The Observer,' 'The Englishman,' and 'Bell's Life,' and who, conducting those Sunday papers with independence, but rather as weekly detailers of news than as organs of opinion, allowed Black to go considerably beyond the Whig traditions of the paper in his bold advocacy of reforms, and yet more in his bold denunciation of abuses.

Black was a clear-headed, far-seeing Scotchman, an ardent disciple of Jeremy Bentham, and an intimate friend of James Mill. 'He played a really important part in the progress of English opinion for a number of years, which is not properly recognised,' John Stuart Mill wrote in 1869; and he added, 'I have always considered him as the first journalist who carried criticism and the spirit of reform into the details of English institutions. Those who are not old enough to remember those times can hardly believe what the state of public discussion then was. People now and then attacked the constitution and the borough-mongers, but

¹ *Hansard*, 1821, cols. 288, &c.

no one thought of censuring the law or the courts of justice, and to say a word against the unpaid magistrates was a sort of blasphemy. Black was the writer who carried the warfare into these subjects, and he broke the spell.' ¹ 'Up to that time,' as Mill also said, 'it was the almost universal creed of Englishmen that the law of England, the judicature of England, the unpaid magistracy of England, were models of excellence. I do not go beyond the mark in saying that, after Bentham, who supplied the principal materials, the greatest share of the merit of breaking down this wretched superstition belongs to Black as editor of "The Morning Chronicle." He kept up an incessant fire against it, exposing the absurdities and vices of the law and the courts of justice until he forced some sense of them into people's minds. On many other questions he became the organ of opinions much in advance of any which had ever before found regular advocacy in the newspaper press. Black was a frequent visitor of my father, and Mr. Grote used to say he always knew by the Monday morning's article whether Black had been with my father on the Sunday.' ²

Black's style was somewhat crabbed, and his judgment hard. If he instructed thoughtful readers, he frightened away those who wanted to be amused, and 'The Chronicle' lost as well as gained influence in his hands, by acquiring a reputation of being duller and more severe than it really was. Its philosophical consistency made it seem inconsistent, and was irritating to shallow and fickle people. They could not understand why Black poured out indignation against the authors of the Peterloo massacre, and yet wrote calmly

¹ Robert Harrison, in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by Leslie Stephen, vol. v. p. 108.

² *Autobiography of John Stuart Mill*, pp. 89, 90.

about Queen Caroline's grievances, and refused to admit that she was a saint as well as a martyr. He offended the Radicals by demolishing Cobbett's rhetoric and questioning his honesty, and he shocked the Whigs by recognising virtue in Canning and declaring that Wellington was sometimes in the right. He alienated many readers, moreover, by paying scant attention to theatrical and other concerns, in a paper in which William Woodfall had patronised the playwrights, and which had had Hazlitt for its dramatic critic. These and similar shortcomings were not atoned for by the slashing articles contributed by Brougham, or Moore's occasional squibs in verse. Black had an able contributor, however, between 1821 and 1824, in Albany Fonblaque, who was now making his mark in journalism;¹ and among other contributors were James Mill,² and his talented and precocious son, who began to write for 'The Chronicle' when he was only about seventeen. John Stuart Mill's first communications were five letters, signed Wickliffe, commenting on the harsh treatment to which the Carliles had been exposed. Three of these letters were published in 'The Chronicle' in January and February 1823. 'The other two,' he said, 'containing things too outspoken for that journal, never appeared at all'; but besides these he wrote much else, 'sometimes notices of books, but oftener letters, commenting on some nonsense talked in parliament, or some defect in the law, or misdoings of the magistracy or the courts of law.'³ Another contributor, supplying dramatic and literary criticisms, as well as copious parliamentary reports and occasional leading articles, was John Payne Collier, who appears to have

¹ *Life and Labours of Albany Fonblaque*, pp. 14, 63.

² Bain, *James Mill: a Biography*, p. 212.

³ *Autobiography*, pp. 88, 89.

transferred his services from 'The Times' to 'The Chronicle' after his difficulty with the House of Commons in 1819. It was not till after 1830 that Collier gave any sign of the craze for antiquarian forgery that marred his good work and wrecked his reputation as a painstaking and intelligent man of letters.¹

The sturdy worth and honesty of 'The Chronicle' placed it at a great disadvantage in its competition with 'The Times,' which, however, gave much offence in those years to both Whigs and Radicals. 'It takes up no falling cause,' it was said too harshly, but with much truth, about 'The Times' in 1823; 'fights no uphill battle, advocates no great principle, holds out a helping hand to no oppressed or obscure individual; it is "ever strong upon the stronger side;" its style is magniloquent, its spirit is not magnanimous.' And the same severe critic added, 'It is elaborate, but heavy; full, but not readable. Stuffed up with official documents, with matter-of-fact details, it might be imagined to be composed, as well as printed, with a steam-engine. It is pompous, dogmatical, and full of pretensions, but neither light, variable, nor agreeable. It sells more, and contains more, than any other paper, and when you have said this you have said all.'²

Much as it was disliked by some, however, 'The Times' made wonderful progress from year to year, under the joint care of the second John Walter, whose enterprise in business ways had no limits, and of Thomas Barnes, who was scarcely less enterprising as an editor; and many of the Whigs and Radicals who condemned the ministry in 'The Chronicle' wrote on such subjects as their consciences allowed in the ministerial 'Times.' Albany Fonblanque was an occasional

¹ G. F. Warner, in *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. xi. p. 349.

² *Edinburgh Review*, May 1823, pp. 362, 364.

contributor,¹ and Brougham was throughout many years one of its regular leader-writers, at a salary of 100*l.* a month. In August 1822, when Brougham was ill, Barnes proposed to Moore that he should temporarily fill the post at the same scale of payment.² Moore declined that offer; but he contributed plenty of verse, and other verse came from Thomas Babington Macaulay. Barnes was indefatigable in seeking out clever writers and tempting them with better remuneration than the other papers gave, and the same policy was pursued as regards parliamentary and other reporters, Walter refusing to be bound by a rule agreed upon by his rivals which fixed the reporter's wage at five guineas a week.³ Among the leader-writers of 'The Times,' however, Edward Sterling continued to be the chief 'thunderer,' at his comfortable salary of 2,000*l.* a year, and on him probably devolved the main duty of vehemently supporting the government of the day in all its tyrannical and perilous policy. Now and then, as in the case of Queen Caroline, 'The Times' ventured to be independent, or to follow the tide of popular opinion; but as a rule it was violently ministerial under Liverpool and Canning and Wellington alike. Its Whig critic's scorn was not unmerited, and all the reforms prepared for in George IV.'s reign, and worked out to some extent in William IV.'s, were achieved without its help, and in defiance of its instructions.

Its policy paid well, and it profited by all its boldness, which its timid contemporaries and rivals regarded as reckless extravagance. It startled the world on January 29, 1829, by appearing as a double sheet,

¹ *Life and Labours of Albany Fonblanque*, p. 8.

² Russell, *Journal, Correspondence, and Memoirs of Thomas Moore*, vol. iii. p. 362.

³ Knight Hunt, vol. ii. p. 196.

giving forty-eight columns in eight pages of the usual size, instead of twenty-four columns in four pages. That was in defiance of the Stamp Act ; but it was winked at by the authorities, as no other and less loyal paper was likely to follow the costly example, which necessitated not only a double outlay in paper and print, but also a troublesome and expensive change of machinery ; and the freak was rarely repeated till the following reign, when a double number of 'The Times' generally appeared once a week or oftener. The nearest anticipation of it had been on June 22, 1821, when 'The Observer,' giving an elaborate account of the coronation of George IV., appeared as a double paper, of which the hitherto unparalleled number of 61,500 copies were sold ; but in that case each of the two sheets was stamped and charged for.

'The Morning Herald' was for a few years the most formidable rival of 'The Times,' not in the collection of foreign news or in the writing of vigorous leaders, but in an extension of journalism which took the public fancy. Until this time, though parliamentary proceedings were reported fully, cases in the law or police courts were seldom recorded, or only briefly hinted at, unless at the conclusion of a trial its details were considered interesting enough to be set forth at length and in complete form. Police cases decided in a few hours were frequently given, of course, if they were deemed amusing, and as part of the current scandal, in each morning's papers, but with no attempt at thoroughness till 'The Morning Chronicle' and 'The Morning Herald' set the fashion. But, whereas 'The Chronicle' reported serious cases in order to comment seriously on them and insist upon necessary reforms, 'The Herald,' with a keener eye to present profit and popularity, tried only or chiefly to be amusing or

sensational in its excursions in this new field of journalism. Thomas Wright, a reporter on the staff of the latter paper, has the credit of making the change, and government interference encouraged it. On October 14, 1823, 'The Herald' reported a Mansion House case in which the captain of a vessel trading to Honduras described the cruel treatment to which emigrants were then subjected, and the disease, starvation, and premature death that ensued among them. The lord mayor, who heard this statement, said it was one to which the newspapers should call attention, and 'The Herald' acted on his suggestion. Thwaites, the principal proprietor of the journal, was thereupon proceeded against for libel by one of the promoters of the emigration scheme whose honesty and humanity had been impugned, and who obtained damages on the ground that newspapers were not justified in repeating accusations made in a magistrate's court. This action was soon followed by another of a similar nature, brought by a solicitor named Duncan, in which 'The Herald' was again punished for its zealous reporting; and the issues were in accordance with a ruling of Lord Ellenborough's in 1811, where 'The Day' was concerned, to the effect that 'it was libellous to publish the preliminary examination before a magistrate previous to committing a man for trial, the tendency of such a publication being to prejudice the minds of jurymen against the accused, and to deprive him of a fair trial.'¹

¹ Barnewall and Cresswell, *Reports of Cases in the Court of King's Bench*, vol. ii. pp. 24, 556; Campbell, *Nisi Prius Cases*, vol. ii. p. 563. In June 1820, Clement, of *The Observer*, was fined for entitling a report 'Shameful Conduct of an Attorney,' and in June 1821, Walter, of *The Times*, was condemned for summarising the evidence at a trial by saying, 'The witness proved the allegations contained in the speech of the learned counsel.' 'The defendant,' said Chief Justice Abbott, 'ought to have detailed and transcribed in the publication the evidence of the witness. If he had done so his readers might then have judged for them-

Thwaites defied the law, however, and his police reports—some of which were republished in 1824 by Wright in an amusing volume entitled 'Mornings at Bow Street'—became a great attraction. The circulation of 'The Morning Herald,' only about 1,500 in 1820, was increased five-fold in the course of the next eight years,¹ and Wright was rewarded with a share in the property he had done so much to improve. For the first time in its history 'The Herald' became an influential paper, and, being too Liberal in its politics to please the Tories, and ceasing to be an unscrupulous supporter of George IV., in whose interests, while he was Prince of Wales, it had been established by Bate Dudley, it was now much less disreputable than formerly.

The old functions of 'The Morning Herald,' as a mere dispenser of 'fashionable intelligence' and aristocratic tittle-tattle of all sorts, devolved on its Tory rival, 'The Morning Post,' which, with a small and still dwindling circulation, was only able to pay its way by reason of the extreme cheapness of the matter provided in it. But it was of slight importance as a ministerial organ; and in yet worse condition was the other and more pretentious Tory paper 'The New Times,' which Dr. Stoddart had started in 1817. Stoddart abandoned journalism in disgust, and went in 1826 to retrieve his fortunes as chief justice of Malta, a post for which he was better fitted than for that of special pleader for the Tories in the columns of a newspaper, and in which he was but scantily rewarded for his long services; and 'The New Times,'

selves. If a party is to be allowed to publish what passes in a court of justice he must publish the whole case, and not merely state the conclusion which he himself draws from the evidence.'—*Barnewall and Alderson, Reports*, vol. iii. p. 702; vol. iv. p. 605.

¹ *Westminster Review*, January 1829, p. 221.

bankrupt in 1828, was resuscitated for three years as 'The Morning Journal.' Neither this paper, under either of its titles, nor 'The Post,' however, brought anything but discredit on the party in office; and, though the party was supported by 'The Herald,' with its circulation, in 1829, of something like 8,000, and by 'The Times,' of which more than 10,000 copies were sold each day, while 'The Chronicle' issued barely 4,000,¹ the government was at this time without a champion to its liking in the press.

There is grotesque evidence of this, and also of the way in which at an earlier period the party had managed to get served in the newspapers, in a letter written by John Wilson Croker, in August 1829, to a friend who consulted him about starting a new Tory journal under ministerial patronage. Croker, it will be remembered, was the Rigby of 'Coningsby,' whom Lord Hertford, called Lord Monmouth in Disraeli's novel, had 'bought.' 'He bought him, with his clear head, his indefatigable industry, his audacious tongue, and his ready and unscrupulous pen; with all his dates, all his lampoons, all his private memoirs, and all his political intrigues.'² Croker, now forty-eight, and soon to resign his twenty-two years' secretaryship of the Admiralty, had written for 'The Times' as far back as 1801, when he addressed to it a series of letters on the French Revolution,³ and had kept up acquaintance with the Walters, father and son, ever since. It was evidently to 'The Times' especially that he alluded in this

¹ Gibbons Merle, in *The Westminster Review*, January 1829, pp. 216, 217, who tells us that the entire circulation of the seventeen daily papers then published was about 40,000. The morning papers were, in their order of commercial value, *The Times*, *Morning Herald*, *Morning Advertiser*, *Morning Journal*, *Morning Post*, and *Public Ledger*; and the evening papers, *The Globe*, *Courier*, *Sun*, *British Traveller*, *Standard*, and *Star*.

² *Coningsby*, chapter i.

³ *Croker Papers*, vol. i. p. 8.

curious letter. 'I have heretofore,' he said, 'conveyed to the public articles written by prime and cabinet ministers, and sometimes have composed such articles under their eye. They supplied the *fact* and I supplied the *tact*, and between us we used to produce a considerable effect.' He did not give his friend much encouragement or any promise of help in the proposed venture, but he added, with the authority of a veteran in this sort of work, 'If anything of the kind were practicable, it ought to be done in the most profound secrecy, and every possible precaution against even a suspicion should be taken; and the minister who should undertake it and you—his "conveyancer," as Junius calls it—should throw in here and there such a slight mixture of error or apparent ignorance as should obviate suspicion of its coming from so high a source. When I used to write, I lived altogether with my political friends, and knew what I was doing, and what ought to be said. The success of that period, of which I was a humble though an active agent, was so complete that it turned the press—I mean the preponderating part of the press—right round. The government had the voice of the journals, and the opposition (what had, I believe, never before happened in the history of English parties)—the opposition complained loudly of the licentiousness of the press; which only meant that they were no longer able to wield it to their own purposes.'¹

The only sort of press licentiousness that ministerialists approved was now beyond their contrivance, the reason being that the Tory party itself was getting beyond the control of any minister. The king's personal views alienated from him many zealous supporters of the crown; such popularity as he had formerly

¹ *Croker Papers*, vol. ii. pp. 22, 23.

enjoyed was shattered for ever by the Queen Caroline scandals ; and his stubbornness on the Catholic emancipation question, though shared by the majority of the Tories, was resented by the more enlightened and more prudent members of the party. So long as Lord Liverpool remained in office there was no open breach, but when he was struck down in 1827, the Duke of Wellington, Peel, and all the old-fashioned Tories held aloof while Canning formed the promising administration which his own death put an end to before it was four months old.

It was in anticipation of these troubles that two bold efforts were made—one successful, the other a notable failure—to start new Tory papers. In 1825 John Murray, the publisher, well pleased with the progress of ‘The Quarterly Review’ under William Gifford’s editorship since its commencement in 1809, projected a daily paper through which Tories of Canning’s school should instruct the world. ‘The Representative,’ pompously heralded and lavishly prepared for, made its appearance on January 25, 1826.¹ Dr. Maginn was sent to Paris as one of its foreign correspondents, and several other writers were engaged at high salaries ; but neither the money nor the brains expended on it made it in any way acceptable to the public, and after some 15,000*l.*, it is said, had been thrown away, it was discontinued on July 29.²

¹ Another *Representative*, a Sunday paper, had been started in January 1822 by Murdo Young, sometime proprietor of *The Sun*, but it only lived throughout the year.

² An absurd statement has been repeatedly made, and was amplified in James Grant’s *Newspaper Press*, that Benjamin Disraeli was editor of *The Representative*. The only plea for believing this rumour is that he never took the trouble to contradict it. Disraeli, not more than twenty-one or twenty-two, was at this time writing the first volume of *Vivian Grey*, and occupying his leisure by playing the dandy in such Whiggish

The other, a more prosperous journal, was 'The Standard,' an offshoot of 'The St. James's Chronicle,' which had existed ever since 1761, as a thrice-a-week evening paper, and of which Charles Baldwin had for some time been proprietor, with Stanley Lees Giffard as editor. At the instigation of the Duke of Wellington, Peel and others, who were not satisfied with 'The Courier,' and anxious to have a vigorous organ which, besides in other ways opposing the Canning section, should be particularly zealous in resisting the movement for Catholic emancipation, Baldwin started 'The Standard' on May 21, 1827. Ably edited by Giffard, who was helped first by Alaric Attila Watts and afterwards by Dr. Maginn, 'The Standard' soon became the chief Tory evening paper. It was too enterprising for its patrons, however. It was only seven months old when great commotion was caused by an injudicious article published a fortnight before the Duke of Wellington's supersession of Lord Goderich, who had ventured to take Canning's vacant place. Wellington, while out of office and not loth to embarrass those whom he regarded as traitors in the Tory camp, had felt himself free to express his genuine thoughts about Catholic emancipation and other questions, both in his own speech and by proxy; but on the eve of his premiership, and with the consciousness that the long-deferred concession to the Irish people could not be much further procrastinated, his attitude was different, and he was not pleased by the persistency or consistency of his nominees on 'The Standard.' The irrepressible Croker

and nondescript society as Lady Blessington brought together. Had he had anything to do with *The Representative* his friends or enemies would certainly have placed the fact beyond doubt; but it is easy to suppose that in later years his vanity was humoured by the ridiculous story. It is possible, but not likely, that his father had something to do with the paper.

‘ saw Herries ’ on January 2, 1828. ‘ We talked about a paragraph of about ten days ago in “ The Standard,” ’ he reported, ‘ which proclaimed that the Tories could not come in without stipulating for the dismissal of the lord steward (Conyngham). We agreed as to the mischievous effect of that paragraph, as it was known that the Duke of Wellington and Peel countenanced that paper, and he told me that a certain person took care that it should go down to Windsor the very night it was published.’ ‘ The king is so displeased with Peel,’ Croker wrote to his patron, Lord Hertford, ‘ and so indignant at that paragraph in “ The Standard,” that he is, they say, resolved to continue what he calls a mixed government, but from which all Tories will recede.’ The Duke of Wellington lost his temper over this business. ‘ What can we do with these sort of fellows?’ he exclaimed. ‘ We have no power over them, and for my part I will have no communication with any of them.’¹

Wellington was appointed premier on January 8, however, notwithstanding the harm he thought ‘ The Standard ’ had done to him, and he had many communications afterwards both with it and with other papers; and ‘ The Standard ’ flourished, though some time passed before it could oust even ‘ The Courier ’ from its place as the evening spokesman for the crumbling Tory party. ‘ Saw Peel,’ Croker wrote in his diary for February 9, 1829, ‘ who begged of me to insert in “ The Courier,” as from myself, his letter to the vice-chancellor of Oxford. I did so, and sent with it a few complimentary words, but in the character of the editor.’²

In 1814 and thereabouts Croker had joined with

¹ *Croker Papers*, vol. i. pp. 397, 399.

² *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 9.

Peel and Palmerston, he tells us, in contributing 'political squibs and lyrics' to 'The Courier'; but even such help, and the more solid assistance it obtained from official sources, did not make it a successful or influential paper. Its fortunes were not improved by the energy of William Mudford, an old friend of John Black's, who edited it during several years before 1828, and who failed in his efforts to adapt its policy to the varying tactics of the Tories in office.

The career of Mudford's successor was a melancholy example of the misfortunes, by no means rare, of Tory journalists. Eugenius Roche had been for some time reporter and, during a year or two, editor of 'The Day' before 1810, when he was imprisoned for a year for libelling Sir Francis Burdett, this being one of the few instances of Tories sharing the punishments that were so frequently incurred by Radicals. In 1813 he was employed on 'The Morning Post,' of which he became editor in 1817, and he gave to it, as he said, 'every hour of his time and almost every thought of his mind' till 1827, when he unluckily accepted the editorship of 'The New Times,' lately vacated by Stoddart. It was a condition of his appointment that he should take shares in the concern, but he had scarcely entered on his duties before he found that he had thereby rendered himself responsible for old debts, which swallowed up all his scanty savings and left him penniless. When 'The New Times' was converted into 'The Morning Journal' in 1828, he went to edit 'The Courier,' which was partly owned by the same proprietors. That post, however, he only held for less than two years, and the salary of 1,000*l.* a year paid or promised to him was not sufficient for his needs. 'Trembling for the ruin which impended over his family,' we are told, 'and expecting each day to be

consigned to the grasp of the myrmidons of the law,' he died of what is called a broken heart when he was barely more than fifty.¹ Soon after his death in 1830, and on the collapse of 'The Morning Journal' and the ruin of its Tory proprietors, 'The Courier' was bought by the Whigs, and began to be somewhat more prosperous as an exponent of different politics.

Another, and sometime notorious, Tory evening paper, 'The Sun,' had already changed its politics and entered on a fresh lease of life, its circulation being quadrupled between 1825 and 1829.² Its new proprietor was Murdo Young, a pioneer in one phase of modern journalism. Until his time the evening papers, as they were called, generally published early in the afternoon, gave little more in the way of news than selections or epitomes of matter contained in the morning journals, with the addition of such original articles as could be procured at small price. 'The Courier' had set the fashion fifteen or twenty years before, during the later stages of the Napoleonic war, of issuing second, and sometimes even third, editions, when it had scraps of fresh intelligence to offer; but these supplementary editions were irregular, and often were catchpenny productions. When Murdo Young altered the politics of 'The Sun,' he also altered its business arrangements. He laid himself out for publishing late news, keeping his men at work if necessary till eleven o'clock at night, in order that he might publish on the same evening a report several columns long, it might be, of the day's proceedings in parliament, or special communications from the provinces or from the continent. The innovation was acceptable

¹ Roche, *London in a Thousand Years, and other Poems*; prefatory memoir (1830).

² *Westminster Review*, January 1829, p. 221.

to readers in London, and yet more in the country. Young established a system of expresses stretching all round London, and even as far as Manchester and Bristol, and was thus able to anticipate the morning papers by at least twelve hours, both in the collection and in the distribution of news. This was no slight feat to perform in days when there were no telegraphs and not even any railways, and when the General Post Office was a nest of jobbery, always dilatory and never to be depended upon.¹ Now and then Young's zeal led him into error, as in 1828, when he obtained beforehand from Richard Lalor Sheil the text of a speech on Catholic emancipation which Sheil had prepared for delivery in Surrey, and published it overnight, to learn next morning that the speech had never been spoken.² But such accidents were rare, and when they happened they only helped to advertise 'The Sun.'

The ablest and the most successful of the evening papers in George IV.'s time, however, was 'The Globe,' especially as it profited by all the experience of 'The Sun,' and now improved on its example in the matter of news, besides surpassing it as a guide and instructor of public opinion. Started in 1803, along with 'The British Press,' and both journals being under the same editor, George Lane, 'The Globe' was during several years a respectable but unimportant organ of the booksellers' trade, containing literary advertisements and general news, and paying very little attention to party politics. In this respect it was surpassed by 'The Traveller,' which, commenced at about the same time, and skilfully edited by Edward Quin, soon became more than a trade journal issued in the interests of commercial travellers. Colonel Robert Torrens, an

¹ *Westminster Review*, January 1829, pp. 230, 231.

² James Grant, *The Newspaper Press*, vol. i. p. 334.

officer of marines who distinguished himself during the long war with France and, unlike most military men, was taught Radicalism by experience of soldiership, became a principal proprietor of 'The Traveller' after his fighting work was over, and used it for enforcement of the opinions he had arrived at in politics and political economy. He found a congenial editor in Walter Coulson, who had formerly been amanuensis to Jeremy Bentham, and was a zealous Benthamite through life. It was in 'The Traveller' that John Stuart Mill, when he was scarcely more than sixteen, near the end of 1822, made his first appearance in print. 'Colonel Torrens wrote much of the political economy of his paper,' said Mill, 'and had at this time made an attack upon some opinion of Ricardo and my father, to which, at my father's instigation, I attempted an answer, and Coulson, out of consideration for my father and good will to me, inserted it.' Torrens replied to this criticism, and a further rejoinder from the young controversialist appeared in this 'liberal journal.'¹ On January 1, 1823, however, 'The Traveller' was absorbed in 'The Globe,' which, 'The British Press' having been dropped as an unprofitable speculation, had been bought by Torrens and his friends, and from that day it appeared as 'The Globe and Traveller.' During the next five years Torrens bought up five other papers, 'The Statesman' and 'The True Briton,' both of long standing but small circulation, 'The Nation,' and 'The Evening Chronicle' and 'The Argus,' both of which had lately been started by James Silk Buckingham,² an indefatigable newspaper projector, whose only successful venture—successful in other hands—was 'The Athenæum,' dating from 1828.

¹ *Autobiography of John Stuart Mill*, pp. 87, 88.

² *Westminster Review*, January 1829, p. 221.

'The Globe,' in the editorship of which Gibbons Merle soon succeeded Coulson, acquired great importance in Torrens's hands. Less enterprising as a collector and prompt dispenser of news than 'The Sun,' it became a vigorous exponent of Whig opinions, and opinions too advanced for the majority of Whigs. The evening associate of 'The Morning Chronicle,' it laboured as zealously for the overturning of the Tory rule, and while that rule lasted, for the promotion of reforms obnoxious to the Tories. Of the good work done by both papers we shall see something presently.

Of the rapid collapse of Toryism during the second half of George IV.'s reign, though not of its extinction, or much weakening to the traditions and prejudices that were soon to appear in altered forms, clear evidence was given in many ways, but there was no clearer evidence than came from the scant supply and poor quality of Tory journalism at this time. While there was much that was faulty and offensive in the Whig and Radical newspapers, these were plentiful, and showed no lack of energy; but the Tory newspapers were few and feeble, as well as faulty and offensive. Among nearly three dozen weekly papers now published, many of them paltry and short-lived, there were several that bravely and effectively opposed the Canning, Goderich, and Wellington administrations, all three of which were included in a term of barely more than three years. The only ministerial supporters of any note, however, were 'John Bull' and its rival in coarseness 'The Age,' which was started in 1825, and these two were at feud with one another and with the daily papers of the same politics, among which also there was no cohesion or agreement. 'The Times' was by far the most powerful of all the journals now published, and it generally used its power against the opponents

of the government, but it was in no sense at this time a government organ. The Duke of Wellington's worthiest champion was 'The Standard,' but it was still young and weak. 'The Standard,' it was said by a competent critic in 1829, 'probably owes its success to the fluctuating policy of "The Courier" at the period when the seeming liberalism of the Government led to a sort of coquetry with a better and higher policy. "The Standard" was set up by the old Tories when they had not a decided organ in the whole of the London press, with the exception, perhaps, of "The Morning Post," which has of late years been in the main a consistent Church and State advocate of high ultra politics. "The Courier," under the direction of another editor¹ than the gentleman who now obeys the mandates of the Treasury, had fluctuated between Canning and Eldon, Wellington and Huskisson, Tory principles and Liberal principles, until its old staunch Tory subscribers began to leave it in great numbers, whilst its liberality was thought of such young growth that it had no accession in numbers from persons of the opposite party. In this state of things "The Standard" was set up; and although for a time its success, notwithstanding the skill of the writers employed upon it, was doubtful, it may now be considered to have succeeded.'²

'The Morning Journal' did more harm than 'The Standard' could do good to the Tory cause, however, and in kicking it out of his way, the Duke of Wellington stumbled considerably towards his own ruin. 'The Morning Journal' was a persistent railer against Wellington from the time when, not daring longer to resist the demand for Catholic emancipation, he introduced a measure to that intent in the session of 1829. The bill

¹ William Mudford, who preceded Eugenius Roche.

² *Westminster Review*, January 1829, p. 229.

was passed in April, but not accepted as a favour by the Irish Catholics and English Whigs and Radicals who had so long been insisting on it. Those Tories who resented it found no excuse for the Premier in the exigencies to which he had yielded. Their bitterness had vent in 'The Morning Journal,' and one particularly angry article appeared in the number of May 14, which, however, referred particularly not to the Catholic Relief Act, but to Wellington's supposed influence over the king in other matters. 'George IV.,' it was said in this article, 'was till now a popular monarch. That he has been rendered otherwise is the act of his imperious minister.' 'There never was a more ambitious or a more dangerous minister in England than the Duke of Wellington,' it was further asserted. 'But if his ascendancy over the monarch be such as it is, or rather such as it is represented to have been, then we are sure that national sympathy must spontaneously flow towards the king. The people must feel intensely the restraints put upon the sovereign, and regret that, overflowing with goodness as he is, kind to excess, fondly attached to his subjects, and paternally anxious to see them all prosperous and happy, he cannot mingle with their public entertainments or receive those congratulations which must be gratifying to his majesty in the course of existence. But his majesty may yet have strength and intrepidity to burst his fetters, dismiss from before his throne evil counsellors, and assume that station in public opinion which befits a popular monarch.'

For those spiteful sentences, containing more irony against King George IV. than the writer can have intended, the Duke of Wellington foolishly instituted proceedings against the printers of 'The Morning Journal,' and the case came on for trial, along with another against the same paper, upon which the verdict

was more disastrous to it, on December 23. After three hours' consideration the jury found that the king, but not his minister, had been libelled, and strongly recommended the prisoners to mercy on the ground that the conduct of the minister called for public reprehension.¹ This, as Charles Greville said, was 'tantamount to a defeat of the prosecution on this charge, and amply proves the folly of having instituted it at all.' 'The whole press have assisted upon this occasion,' Greville reported, 'and in some very powerful articles have spread to every corner of the country the strongest condemnation of the whole proceeding,' and he added that Wellington's unpopularity was certain to be increased by his inability to retaliate, 'not that he would be sorry to adopt any measure which should tend to fetter free discussion, and submit the press to future punishment; but this would be a fearful war to wage, and I do not think he is rash enough to undertake such a crusade.'²

Wellington's soldierly statesmanship was not equal to that enterprise; but he did other reckless things, and, scorned by his own party and its feeble representatives in the press, and openly jeered at by the newspapers that were not Tory, he hastened on the crisis to himself and the Toryism of that day which a more prudent politician could not have long deferred. It was his refusal to accede to the popular demand for reform of the civil list which immediately caused his overthrow after a new parliament had been elected as a consequence of William IV.'s accession. 'Hated, despised, derided, covered with every species of disgrace,' Albany Fonblanque then wrote in 'The Examiner,' 'the Wellington administration has fallen—an example and a warning to statesmen of the

¹ *Examiner*, December 27, 1829. ² *Greville Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 259.

controlling genius of the age and the power of opinion. Six years ago the declaration against reform which passed from Wellington's lips as his doom, marking him rash and dangerous—six years ago the same speech would have been received with cheers, re-echoed with praise by all the sycophants, parasites, dupes, and fools in the United Kingdoms. But a different understanding has begun to prevail. The eyes of men are opened, their wits sharpened against abuses, and the mere worldlings, even the time-servers and slaves of authority, saw that the minister was a discredited and lost man when he uttered the impudent outrage against truth and the common sense of the nation. He is now departed from the place of power, and with him are for ever gone the antiquated principles of misgovernment, whose sudden revival caused almost as instant destruction.' ¹

Fonblanque's blame was too sweeping, and his forecast too sanguine; but there was more truth in both than the Tories liked.

¹ Fonblanque, *England under Seven Administrations*, vol. ii. pp. 45, 46.

CHAPTER XV.

THE RADICAL REVOLT.

1826—1836.

THE year 1769 is often given as the date of ‘the birth of English Radicalism, and the first serious attempt to reform and control parliament by a pressure from without, making its members habitually subservient to their constituents’;¹ and just half a century later, in 1819, it is said, ‘the reformers first assumed the name of Radicals.’² But the movement here referred to was not one to which either dates or names can be accurately assigned. There had been democratic dreams and bursts of action during the centuries before the Revolution of 1688; and these were only imitated, varied, or improved upon during the century and a half that followed. Wilkes was to some extent a Radical; and in Burke, a vastly superior man in every way, the spirit of Radicalism was purer and more lasting. If we accept Burke’s remark in his ‘Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontent’—‘I see no other way for the preservation of a decent attention to public interests in the representatives but the interposition of the body of the people itself’—as the initial statement of the Radical creed, we can trace the thought that prompted it in the speech and in the conduct of men

¹ Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. iii. p. 174.

² Martineau, *History of the Thirty Years’ Peace*, vol. i. p. 226.

who lived long before him ; and not till long after his time, if at any time at all, was it expressed fully enough and with sufficient honesty and persistence in either the speech or the conduct of other men. It is convenient and not misleading, however, to attribute to the political disturbances incident to the early years of George III.'s reign the crude commencement of what is now known as the Radical party, and to the closing years of that reign its first assuming of something like its present shape.

Modern Radicalism began to assert itself in England in the schemes and protests of those students in the school of thought that produced the French Revolution who were denounced by their enemies as Jacobins, but among whom there were many and wide differences, both of motive and of method, and some of whom, at least, can hardly be credited either with motives or with methods that were either intelligible or consistent. In youthful disciples of Rousseau, like Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Southey, the Radicalism soon passed into various grades of Toryism ; and men like Shelley and Leigh Hunt, starting almost from the same point, but proceeding in a different direction, though they were Radicals to the end, were Radicals rather from sentiment than from reason. Quite another sort of Radicalism found noisy spokesmen in men like Cobbett, 'Orator' Hunt, and Sir Francis Burdett, and it was not all gain to the cause of progress that they were chiefly instrumental in stirring up so much angry feeling that the suicidal Tory government was inclined to meet it with attacks on the populace of which the Peterloo massacre was the most conspicuous, and with the despotic legislation that culminated in the Six Acts. A third sort of Radicalism, associated in some respects with both the others, but distinct from them, was the

Radicalism of which Jeremy Bentham was the pioneer, and which had for its first text-books his 'Fragment on Government,' published in 1776, and his 'Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation,' published in 1789.

Bentham's foremost disciple and apostle was James Mill, who, settling in London in 1800, when he was twenty-seven, had not found it inexpedient, as a Radical, to earn money by writing critical essays in and after 1802 for 'The Anti-Jacobin Review,' which was a monthly sequel to Canning's 'Anti-Jacobin,' and by editing in 1805 and the two or three following years 'The St. James's Chronicle,' the tri-weekly Tory paper, which was at that time owned by his friend and publisher, Charles Baldwin.¹ He soon, however, became the leader, under the now venerable Bentham, of the new London school of Radicalism, and, especially after he had obtained comfortable employment in the India Office in 1819, was the centre of a brilliant circle of deep thinkers and brave workers, among whom George Grote, his junior by twenty-one years, Albany Fonblanque, a year older than Grote, and his own son, John Stuart Mill, yet twelve years younger, were to be the most famous and serviceable. Other members of the group were John Black, the editor of 'The Morning Chronicle,' Walter Coulson, the editor of 'The Traveller,' John Bowring, the first editor of 'The Westminster Review,' which Bentham started in 1823, and William Molesworth, for whom the younger Mill edited the 'London Review' from 1834 till 1836, when it was amalgamated with 'The Westminster.' Both 'The Chronicle' and 'The Traveller' were Whig, or, as they preferred to call themselves,

¹ James Mill also projected in 1803, and edited till 1806, *The Literary Journal*, a precursor of *The Literary Gazette* and *The Athenæum*.—Bain, *James Mill; a Biography*, pp. 41, 46, 47.

Liberal, papers, in which Radical views could only be discreetly propounded ; but Fonblanque wrote much and boldly in 'The Chronicle' until 'The Examiner' claimed all his attention, and these two, with 'The Traveller,' afterwards 'The Globe and Traveller,' were valuable instructors of public opinion during and after the reign of George IV.

'The Examiner' lost ground after Leigh Hunt was forced to resign the editorship in 1821 ; but he and Shelley sent contributions from Italy, and new life was put into it in 1826, when Albany Fonblanque became its chief political writer, so continuing till the whole management—leading in some way to sole ownership—was assigned to him in 1830 by Dr. Fellowes, its then proprietor. We have seen how John and Leigh Hunt commenced this excellent Sunday paper in 1808 as a heroic champion of the wisest and truest Radical thought that the public was at that time able to apprehend, and how they nobly carried on their work through more than a dozen years, suffering imprisonment and losing health and money in so doing. It was a welcome chance, or more than chance, that the same paper should now be the channel for the utterance of stronger, if not worthier, Radical teaching by a Radical of firmer if not loftier mind. Some years afterwards, Leigh Hunt said gracefully in his old age, 'I had an editorial successor, Mr. Fonblanque, who had all the wit for which I toiled, without making any pretensions to it. He was the genuine successor, not of me, but of the Swifts and Addison themselves ; profuse of wit even beyond them, and superior in political knowledge.'¹ Leigh Hunt and Fonblanque were equals, in different grooves, and if the younger man, with keener intellect and stabler judgment, was a better politician and not inferior in

¹ *Autobiography of Leigh Hunt*, p. 155.

literary skill, the elder is no less worthy of our reverence, and not alone because he was in many ways a martyr to the cause he served.

Fonblanque's connection with 'The Examiner' began opportunely. The parliament that was dissolved at the end of May 1826, the first in which Radicals showed themselves as a small party separate from the Whigs in opposition to the dominant Tories, had made feeble attempts at dealing with several of the questions now pressing for solution ; among them, the widespread commercial depression and industrial distress, ruining great merchants and threatening the working classes with starvation, for which the only reasonable remedies proposed were reduction or abolition of the corn dues and reduction of public expenditure, and, as a help towards securing those remedies, parliamentary reform by extension of the franchise and rearrangement of seats. Lord John Russell's motion on April 27, 'that the present state of the representation of the people in parliament requires the serious consideration of this house,' had obtained as many as 123 votes to 247 ; but Joseph Hume, at this time looked upon as the leader of the Radicals, had only thirty-four votes in support of his motion on May 4, for an inquiry into the deplorable state of the nation, which he set forth under forty-five distinct counts. In the new House of Commons, which was elected in June, but did not meet till November, the Radical force was somewhat increased, but the Whigs were fewer, and the outlook was not encouraging. It was with reference to the elections that Fonblanque wrote one of the first, if not quite the first, of his articles in 'The Examiner.' 'A traveller,' he said, with the fondness for apt illustration or parable that was peculiar to him, 'observed a poor Englishman day after day incessantly patrolling the streets of Geneva in great

distress of mind. On asking him the cause of his trouble, he answered that he wanted to get home to England, but that he had not the means of paying for any conveyance. "My friend," replied the other, "if you had daily walked in the direct way towards the object of your wishes the distance you have daily walked in despair about the streets of Geneva, you would have been at your journey's end by this time." Let us be wiser than this poor man, and, instead of being filled with despair by the length of the distance between us and our object, let us endeavour steadily and perseveringly to gain the comparatively small space of ground immediately before us, neither discouraged by real difficulties nor resting our reliance on vain hopes, and trusting to nothing but our own energies and constancy, which will carry us, with small means, to the attainment of great objects.' ¹

In that spirit Fonblanque worked on 'The Examiner' through more than a quarter of a century. He was in some respects what would now be called an opportunist, but of the best sort. Till near the end—when he wavered somewhat, as is natural to old men, who, having seen the attainment of so many of the objects they aimed at, have found that they have not all been as beneficial as they expected—he was a thoroughgoing Radical of Bentham's school; seeing clearly what was wrong in social and political institutions, and zealous to reform them, but too clear-headed and honest to ally himself completely with any party or section, or even to surrender his independence of judgment by slavish following of Bentham's teaching in details; preferring to stand by principles, with such varying

¹ Fonblanque, *England under Seven Administrations*, vol. i. p. 7. These three volumes contain a reprint of articles contributed by Fonblanque to *The Examiner* between 1826 and 1836.

methods of obedience to them as each year's and each week's conditions and circumstances suggested. The motto that he found printed on the first page of 'The Examiner' when he began to write for it was 'Party is the madness of many for the gain of a few.' For it, when 'The Examiner' became his own property, he substituted these sentences of Defoe's : 'If I might give a short hint to an impartial writer, it would be to tell him his fate. If he resolves to venture upon the dangerous precipice of telling unbiassed truth, let him proclaim war with mankind—neither to give nor to take quarter. If he tells the crimes of great men, they fall upon him with the iron hand of the law. If he tells them of virtues, when they have any, then the mob attacks him with slander. But if he regards truth, let him expect martyrdom on both sides, and then he may go on fearless.'

Boldly and persistently discussing the various phases of the political problem from week to week, Fonblanque lost no opportunity of calling attention to social abuses, and to their causes both in remediable faults among the people themselves, and in the misgovernment by which those faults were aggravated. He zealously denounced the vices incident to maintenance of the House of Lords and the Established Church. He was yet more energetic in exposing the defects in the machinery for administering justice ; the blunders and shortcomings of the magistracy being with him a special object of attack, and a constant theme for his mockery and expostulation. To him, in no slight measure, were due the reform of the metropolitan police, and improved arrangements for the detection of crime and the treatment of criminals. These were some of his themes.

In his own trade of journalism, and the pernicious

policy adopted towards it by the crown and its advisers, he took, of course, particular interest. In an article on 'Liberty and Licentiousness of the Press,' prompted in 1827 by a renewal of severity in arbitrarily enforcing the law of libel, we have a good specimen of his satire. 'The licentiousness of the press,' he said, 'is a term of the very widest range, including as it does everything that is offensive to anybody. The liberty of the press, on the other hand, seems to come under the mathematical definition of a point; it has neither length, breadth, nor thickness.' 'There is one body only which the press is permitted to abuse with entire freedom, and which the more it abuses by falsehood the more highly its conduct will be extolled by the authorities. That body, we need hardly say, is the people. To misrepresent every circumstance of public affairs, to praise the incapable, call pillage necessary expenditure, and distress prosperity, are falsehoods tending to social injury which will never be numbered among the offences of the press. While, indeed, it deals only in these untruths, it is complimented on the quiet decorum of its conduct. In the invention of falsehoods for the damage of the people there is no offence; in the invention of falsehoods to the discredit of the government there is the greatest. The reason of the distinction is obvious; the hurtful delusion of the people is not a government concern.'¹

When Canning succeeded Lord Liverpool as premier in April 1827, many of the Whigs welcomed the change, and expected speedy benefits from his rule. Fonblanque recognised the rising statesman's merits, and rejoiced in the separation from him of Wellington, Peel, and the other Tory malcontents; but he warned his readers that Canning was not to be trusted because he was a good man; and he uttered the same warnings about

¹ *England under Seven Administrations*, vol. i. pp. 92, 96.

Lord Goderich, who was in office from August 1827 till January 1828. "“Private vices,” says Mandeville, “are frequently public virtues,”” Fonblanque wrote on the occasion of Goderich’s retirement. ‘We are almost tempted to maintain the converse, and to hold that private virtues are often public mischiefs. George III.’s constancy to his wife and his shoulder of mutton, his taste for regularity and simplicity, and the blameless tenor of his domestic life, enabled him to plunge us into wasting, unjust, and unnecessary wars. Had he kept various concubines, and dined off French dishes at nine o’clock, the people would have had a lively perception of the depravity of his politics and an intimate persuasion of their wrongs. As it was, he soared to heaven between the shoulders of mutton and the arms of his wife. Two o’clock dinners and conjugal fidelity procured the remission of his political sins and his canonisation as a royal saint. How dearly we have paid for his mutton and his marital virtue!’ And that private virtue is no guarantee for public worth, and may easily be a pretext for grievous wrongdoing, is as true, said Fonblanque, of ministers as of kings, and was shown in the careers of Lord Londonderry, Lord Sidmouth, Lord Bathurst, Lord Eldon, and others.¹

Towards the Duke of Wellington, whose administration lasted from January 1828 till November 1830, Fonblanque showed no mercy ; and he found fault with Brougham, Cobbett, and the other shifty Whigs or Radicals who supported him. ‘As premiers have become deities,’ he scornfully remarked, ‘politics have necessarily become a theology, and particular politicians are to be examined according to new rules and judged not as statesmen but as man-worshipping religionists. Creeds, not speeches, should be the fashion now in

¹ *England under Seven Administrations*, vol. i. pp. 127–30.

parliament, and an "I believe in Wellington" will most effectually obviate all inquiry or objection."¹ Fonblanque missed no opportunity of denouncing Wellington, and when Wellington's master died in June 1830, the fulsome panegyrics published in other papers led him to use plain language in 'The Examiner.' 'In his youth he was libertine and profuse,' it was then said concerning George IV., 'and from his mature age he showed a preference for persons possessed of no qualities entitling them to consideration or respect. They have been distinguished by the king's favour, and nothing else—quacks, serviles, sycophants, and buffoons. The maxim "Noscitur a sociis" would be a severe test of the late king's character. When occasions for magnanimity have offered, George IV. has been found wanting. His persecution of his queen was at once mean and cruel; and his conduct towards Napoleon Bonaparte, however justifiable in policy, was not very exalted in sentiment.' 'As for the public events of his reign, for which honour is demanded for him, while in ignorance of his part in the accomplishment of them we know not how to concur in the praise. We must distinguish between the fly on the chariot and the causes of its course.'²

The chariot had advanced, however, and no small share of the progress was due to the zeal and wisdom of the newspaper reformers, among whom Albany Fonblanque now held the foremost place. 'It cannot be denied,' he said at the close of 1830, 'that for the last ten years step after step has been won, and not one inch of ground anywhere lost. We have experienced no defeats; we have been stayed, indeed, but never thrust back.'³ Catholic emancipation had been gained; the

¹ *England under Seven Administrations*, vol. i. p. 154.

² *Ibid.*, vol. ii. pp. 16-18.

³ *Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 80.

Test and Corporation Act had been repealed ; great, though insufficient, changes in fiscal arrangements had been made ; vast improvements had been effected in the administration of the law, on which both in 'The Morning Chronicle' and in 'The Examiner' Fonblanque had insisted with special force and perseverance, though without neglect of other matters ; and there had been much preparation for a breaking down of the oligarchic institution styled the House of Commons. All these victories, and many more, had been gained in defiance of an obstinate king and a series of Tory ministries, commanding Tory majorities in parliament, and with no more help from time-serving Whigs than they cared to render in languid sympathy with the misgoverned masses, and in less languid anxiety to oust their hereditary rivals from office and influence.

Though as yet there were no daily papers published out of London—with the exception of 'The Freeman's Journal' in Dublin, and of the obnoxious 'Saunders's Newsletter,' concerning which and its Orange compeers Daniel O'Connell said, 'They have "The Warden," which lies once a week, "The Mail," which lies three times a week, and sly "Saunders," which collects a heap of borrowed lies every morning'¹—the provincial weeklies had made great progress during George III.'s reign, and nearly all the more important of these were Radical journals. Chief of all was 'The Manchester Guardian,' which had been established in 1821 by John Edward Taylor as a direct outcome of the reforming spirit that Lord Liverpool's administration had merely encouraged by the Peterloo massacre, and which, issued on Saturdays, had a Tuesday continuation in 'The Manchester Mercury' ; and other vigorous papers, like 'The Scotsman' in Edinburgh, 'The Leeds

¹ *Westminster Review*, January 1830, p. 89.

Mercury,' and 'The Liverpool Mercury,' which called themselves Liberal in preference to Radical, were far in advance of orthodox Whig opinion. It is more remarkable than strange that, with few exceptions, the only formidable country papers of Tory views were those, like 'The Birmingham Gazette,' kept up by outside help in strongholds of Radicalism, while in Tory-controlled and aristocratic towns like Brighton, which had its 'Herald' and its 'Guardian,' only Radical journalism was popular.¹ The high prices necessitated by the stamp duty, and the poverty of the working classes, prevented more than a few of the country papers from having a large sale; but it was reckoned in 1830 that in Manchester each copy of the 'Guardian' and the 'Mercury' had at least seventy or eighty readers upon an average, and their influence and authority as promoters of reform was very great indeed.

In London, also, several new papers were started in these years to give utterance to the demands of zealous reformers, one such being 'The World,' commenced in December 1826, and edited by Stephen Bourne, which was the first and only organ of the Nonconformists until it gave place, in 1833, to 'The Patriot,' under the management of Josiah Conder.

The most notable of the new London weekly papers, however, were 'The Atlas' and 'The Spectator.' 'The Atlas' made a very ambitious appearance on Sun-

¹ *Westminster Review*, January 1830, pp. 73, 74. 'A few years ago,' says the same informant (p. 77), 'it was by no means unusual to see advertisements, "Wanted, an editor for a provincial newspaper who understands the business of reporting and can work at ease." We have heard of one instance in which a gentleman was offered 80*l.* per annum, to compile a paper, write an original leader, report the proceedings before the magistrates, compose two columns of the paper, and assist in the evening in serving in the shop of the proprietor, who was a stationer.' The better country papers had passed out of that stage before 1830; though parallels could be found to it in 1887.

day, May 21, 1826, as 'a general newspaper and journal of literature, on the largest sheet ever printed,' and the high price of a shilling was charged for its sixteen folio pages, with three columns on each page. It was started as an organ of the Benthamite school, and, after a few weeks, the editorship was assigned to Robert Stephen Rintoul, a very able Scotchman, now in his fortieth year, who, having managed 'The Dundee Advertiser' with great success for more than twelve years after its commencement in 1813, in the course of which time he made the acquaintance of Joseph Hume and other prominent Radicals, was invited to undertake more important work in London. He made a promising beginning on 'The Atlas,' with Hazlitt, Fonblanque, and others to assist him; but differences of some sort arose between the proprietors and the editor of 'The Atlas;' and, Fonblanque going to 'The Examiner,' Hume and others raised a fund to enable Rintoul to start 'The Spectator' as their champion in the press.

The first number of the new paper appeared on July 5, 1828, and it was throughout nearly thirty years under the absolute control of Rintoul, who used it very skilfully and worthily as an exponent of what he called 'educated Radicalism.' It was somewhat crotchety from the first, but unquestionably honest, ably written, and remarkably well edited as regards both its selection and epitomising of news and its literary and political criticisms. 'He had a natural propensity to examine every question from all points of view,' we are told of Rintoul by one of his disciples. 'He was anxious to free his mind from all prepossessions that might obscure the truth; and the fusion or confusion of parties at the time "The Spectator" was started predisposed the general public to support

a journal conducted in this impartial spirit.'¹ It was a special school, however, rather than the general public that accepted Rintoul's guidance, and he was an apt interpreter of views touching parliamentary and other reform which were held by Benthamites like Grote and influential associates like Hume. 'He was a reformer both by conviction and sentiment. He was no party man ; but here was a national, not a party movement. The sympathies of all his most valued political advisers were with the reform movement. After mature and dispassionate reflection, he came to the conclusion that it was his duty as a journalist to throw himself into the scale of reform.'² 'The Spectator' soon became a power in his hands.

It was probably the competition of 'The Spectator' which led Dr. Fellowes to make Fonblanque editor and 'trustee,' as well as leader-writer, of 'The Examiner' at the close of 1830, and from that time it was, as regards news and general information, a far more energetic exponent of the best and most forcible Radicalism than it had been before. 'Dr. Fellowes's politics,' said Fonblanque in 1847, 'were those of an enlightened Radical reformer, more than Whig but short of Chartist. The steady progress of improvement was what he desired. He quarrelled not if it were somewhat slow, so that advance was made. The spirit of toleration which was his animating spirit preached patience in politics as in everything else ; and so that evil was yielding to good, he made allowances for difficulties and delays.'³ Fellowes and Fonblanque were of one mind ; and the latter, forcibly and pungently, with flashing wit and sustained humour, gave voice to the thoughts and aspirations of both. 'There is one thing,'

¹ *Spectator*, May 1, 1858.² *Ibid.*³ *Life and Labours of Albany Fonblanque*, p. 27.

Lord Durham wrote to Fonblanque in 1836, 'which I admire more than your rare wit, your irresistible humour, and fine scholarship ; and that is the thorough healthiness of your political views.'¹

The question of parliamentary reform was not new, but assumed new shape, when the death of George IV. and the political re-arrangements that followed it brought the Whigs into power. Fonblanque had insisted upon it all along in 'The Examiner' ; had made merry over such Whig suggestions as one that appeared in 'The Morning Chronicle' in 1828, to the effect that the best way to improve the quality of the House of Commons was to raise the property qualification, seeing that a low franchise only increased the power of the aristocracy over 'the proletarians, who have a slavish worship of rank' ; had pointed out the pernicious working of aristocratic tyranny in such articles as one on 'The Parliamentary Slave Trade of 1829,' denouncing the Duke of Newcastle's ejectment of tenants who refused to vote as he bade them ; and had emphasised in every way, by clear argument and apt illustration, the views put forward by Bentham and the Benthamites. In a string of 'Anticipations,' containing suggestions for a political dictionary that might be compiled in the twentieth century, he defined 'parliament' as 'a compound from the French of "parler," to speak, and "mentir," to lie.' 'Hence,' he said, 'truth is called unparliamentary language. Before the Reformation the great business of the houses of legislature was to deceive the people. They openly called themselves "the estates," and were cultivated for the benefit of the aristocracy.' He was not prepared to admit that the reformation he desired was assured when, in November 1830, the Wellington administration was defeated by a majority

¹ *Life and Labours of Albany Fonblanque*, p. 34.

of 233 to 204, and when, in consequence, Earl Grey formed his composite cabinet of Whigs, Canningites and nondescripts ; or even when in December a committee, consisting of Lord John Russell, the cleverest manipulator of Whig compromises, Lord Durham, the most Radical of the Whigs, Sir James Graham, the most Radical of the Canningites, and Lord Duncannon, was appointed to prepare a scheme for such reconstruction of the parliamentary machine as might humour the nation without more weakening than was inevitable, perhaps with actual strengthening, of the aristocracy. And after Lord John Russell had introduced his famous measure in March 1831, while Fonblanque was ready to accept the bill as it stood, if it could not be improved, he was especially anxious to improve it, and only joined in the popular cry which Rintoul had started in 'The Spectator'—'The bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill!'—in the sense of tolerating nothing less than the bill.

After the House of Commons, for rejecting Lord John Russell's project, had been dissolved in April, and appeal made to the people to elect a new house by which the question should be decided, and after the revived bill, as passed by that house in September, had been rejected by the Lords in October—that is, while preparation was being made for the final struggle and victory—John Stuart Mill wrote a characteristic letter to Fonblanque. 'What I want to talk to you about is the critical state of public affairs,' he said. 'I am persuaded that everything depends on the attitude of the people. Their enemies will give up nothing, but in the fear of worse following. *That* we may lay down as a certain position. Well, then, how is that attitude to be secured? The difficulties are very great. The people, to be in the best state, should appear to be ready and

impatient to break out into outrage, *without actually breaking out*. The press, which is our only instrument, has at this moment the most delicate and the most exalted functions to discharge that any power has yet had to perform in this country. It has at once to raise the waves and to calm them; to say, like the Lord, "Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further." With such words ringing in their ears, ministers cannot waver if they would; and I think you have begun to distrust them, or at least to express your distrust, too soon. We should do everything we can to prevent even the appearance of the cabinet not being with us, and I believe they are heartily in earnest with the bill; that is, as far as Schedules A and B¹ and the 10*l.* qualification. With these conditions I am at ease about the rest, and if there are certain things which will enable certain lords to say, "Ah! the bill is now endurable," I know no objection. Given A and B and the qualification, and I say it is *the bill*. The parliament will meet, if not on the day to which it is prorogued, certainly on December 1; that I believe on good authority. We must, therefore, hold the language of assurance; tell the lords that they will have but a short respite, and that the king—let us not forget him—and the people will not be disappointed. I am terrified at the idea of any collapse in the public mind—that there should be any idea of despondency. This would give heart, and along with it strength, to our bitter enemies; and this

¹ Disfranchising entirely sixty small boroughs, which returned in all a hundred and nineteen members, and taking one apiece from forty-seven other boroughs, then returning ninety-four members. By Schedules C, D, E and F it was proposed to add forty-two members to town and fifty-five to county constituencies in England, and five in Scotland, one in Wales, and three in Ireland; thus reducing the total strength of the House of Commons from 658 to 596. These figures were considerably altered afterwards.

would be a sure effect of the opinion that we are abandoned by the ministers.’¹

In another letter, written early in 1835, Mill showed himself angry with Fonblanque for not insisting strongly enough on the ballot, to which Mill himself was stoutly opposed in later years, but which, with his concurrence, Grote had proposed in 1834 to the first House of Commons elected under the Reform Act and which Grote again proposed to the next parliament in June 1835. ‘Unless you and a few others bestir yourselves, and give the word to the people to meet and petition for the ballot during the next few weeks, Grote’s motion will go off flatly, as it did last year, and if so the consequences will be unspeakably mischievous. It is enough to drive one mad to see everybody do everything except the precise thing which is of importance at the time, and so every opportunity lost.’²

Fonblanque did not deserve Mill’s reproach. Few men knew so well as he how to use the best weapons and choose the best occasions for attacking abuses and promoting reforms, and he got frequent and valuable help in both ways from Mill, who in these years wrote much in ‘The Examiner,’ and who acknowledged that his friend was ‘zealous in keeping up the fight for Radicalism against the Whig ministers.’³ They afterwards fell apart, however, and Fonblanque always declined to be ranked with the ‘philosophical Radicals,’ deeming that in holding aloof from all sects and cliques he could best prove himself a loyal disciple of Bentham. The ‘philosophical Radicals’ were at this time somewhat at variance among themselves, as appeared in the setting up in 1834 of ‘The London Review’ in opposition to ‘The Westminster’; and ‘The Spectator’ was

¹ *Life and Labours of Albany Fonblanque*, pp. 29, 30. ² *Ibid.*, p. 30.

³ *Autobiography of John Stuart Mill*, p. 197.

the avowed spokesman for their more important section. There is curious illustration of the instability of some of the politicians in the fact that in 1834, when Fonblanque proposed to several of his friends that they should pay ten years' subscriptions to 'The Examiner' in one amount, to enable him to set up new printing machinery, two volunteers to the fund were Edward Bulwer, at that time Radical member for Lincoln, and Benjamin Disraeli, lately defeated as a Radical at Wycombe, and now Radical candidate for Marylebone. Another and a less versatile contributor to the fund was William, afterwards Sir William, Clay, who, in his letter to Fonblanque, 'trusts the time may yet arrive when the editor of "The Examiner" shall be as widely acknowledged as he justly deserves to rank among the very foremost of those whose labours have tended to make truth prevalent, have furthered the sacred cause of equal rights, of government for the good of all, and promoted consequently in the highest degree the happiness of mankind.' ¹

Fonblanque had plenty to do in criticising, and supporting where he thought it worthy of support, the conduct of Lord Grey's and Lord Melbourne's administrations until the latter's collapse in 1834, and afterwards in more boldly attacking the short-lived government of Sir Robert Peel. The business that most concerns us here, however, was the increased agitation now on foot for removing the legal restrictions on newspapers. 'The disputes about the liberty of the press,' Fonblanque wrote in a lively article on 'The Black Art' in 1831, 'will one day be read with as much wonder as the disputes about witchcraft. The belief that helpless old hags could ride the winds, and dispense sickness, sorrow, and calamity, will not seem less

¹ *Life and Labours of Albany Fonblanque*, pp. 35, 36.

astonishing than the belief that poor scribblers can exercise baneful powers over the public mind, and order at pleasure the rise and fall of institutions. Libel is the black art of modern times ; the pen, the broomstick ; the press, the cauldron ; and the viler the ingredients flung in, of the more fearful potency the charm is supposed to be.' But witches, he urged, had not been got rid of by persecutions, which had only degraded them and made them more obnoxious and law-breaking ; and so it must be with the press. 'By imposing taxes on newspapers, which place them out of reach of the needy, a contraband trade has been called into existence, and a cheap illicit spirit, ten times above proof, has been hawked among the working classes. The cheap publications, of whose inflammatory tendency so much complaint is made, are the offspring of the stamp duties. Reduce the price of the journals which have some character at stake for truth and knowledge, and this fry would sink in the competition.'¹

The complaints of well-to-do and self-satisfied people about the so-called vice of the illicit papers, and the complaints of the producers and readers of those papers about the tyranny with which they were treated, had both been growing for many years ; and this quarrel now became far more serious and important than the still very frequent recurrence of the old persecutions of the high-priced journals under the Libel Act.

The newspaper stamp, which since 1815 had been fourpence, with a discount of twenty per cent., for each copy sold, together with the tax of three shillings and sixpence on each advertisement, and the duty on paper, varying from three half-pence to threepence a pound, according to quality, was a heavy burden on the pro-

¹ *England under Seven Administrations*, vol. ii. pp. 142, 145.

prietors of the high-priced journals and their readers, the charge which it was found necessary to make for 'The Times,' 'The Examiner,' and most of the daily and weekly papers being sevenpence, and for some, like 'The Spectator' and 'The Atlas,' as much as tenpence and a shilling.¹ But the hardship upon those who could not afford to pay such prices was much greater. The law was repeatedly eluded by adventurous publishers of surreptitious prints, some of which, if their circulation was small, were not seriously hunted down; and it was openly evaded in some cases, especially in 'Cobbett's Register,' which, issued in the form and style of a small magazine or pamphlet, escaped the stamp duty and was sold for twopence. The issuing of such publications as 'Cobbett's Register' without being stamped had, however, been rendered illegal by the fifth of the Six Acts passed in 1819. Joseph Hume proposed the abolition of this act in 1827, but there were only twelve members of the House of Commons, including himself, to support the motion; and he had been equally unsuccessful in 1825, when he moved the reduction of the stamp duty

¹ The payments made by the proprietors of *The Times* to the Exchequer in 1828 were as follows :—

	£	s.	d.
3,046,500 stamps	48,516	13	4
Duty on 92,969 advertisements	16,269	11	6
„ 6,703 reams of paper, at 10s.	3,351	3	0
	68,137	7	10

During the same year William Clement paid, on account of *The Morning Chronicle* and his three other papers, *The Observer*, *Bell's Life in London*, and *The Englishman* :—

	£	s.	d.
2,735,868 stamps	45,597	15	0
Duty on 29,638 advertisements	5,185	15	6
„ 5,471 reams of paper, at 10s.	2,735	10	0
	53,519	0	6

Being in the one case nearly 1,300*l.*, and in the other more than 1,000*l.* a week.—*Westminster Review*, January 1829, pp. 217, 218.

to twopence, and the advertisement tax to a shilling. It was an inevitable sequel to these failures that, in years of such public excitement and demand for news as those before and after the passing of the Reform Act, the law and its agents in the stamp office should be boldly defied. A systematic war against the authorities began, and lasted till victory was achieved, in which Henry Hetherington was the captain and the chief hero, though James Watson, William Carpenter, Julian Hibbert, John Cleave, William Lovett, and others were brave and honest fellow-workers and fellow-sufferers.

Hetherington, born in 1792, was a printer and bookseller in Soho and afterwards in the Strand, who was one of George Birkbeck's earliest and most active associates in promoting mechanics' institutes, and zealous in other work for the improvement of the people. He was also the chief founder of the Metropolitan Political Union in March 1830, which was the germ both of trades-unionism and of the Chartist movement.¹ 'Of all the men in the battle for the people's right,' says one of his friends, 'I have known none more single-minded, few so brave, so generous, so gallant as he. He was the most chivalrous of all our party. He could neglect his own interests ; but he never did, and never could, neglect his duty to the cause he had embraced, to the principles he had avowed. There was no notoriety-hunting in him. He would toil in any unnoticeable good work for freedom, in any "forlorn hope," even, when he saw that justice was with them, for men who were not of his party, as cheerfully and vigorously as most other men will labour for money or fame or respectability. If strife and wrath lay in his path, it was seldom from any fault of

¹ *Life and Struggles of William Lovett*, pp. 54, 56 ; W. J. Linton, *James Watson ; a Memoir*, p. 34.

his ; for, though hasty, as a man of impulsive nature, and chafed by some afflictions, he was not intolerant, nor quarrelsome, nor vindictive. He was utterly without malice, and he would not have harmed his worst enemy, though, in truth, he detested tyranny and tyrants.’¹

In the autumn of 1830, following the example of William Carpenter in some ‘Political Letters’ that he had published at irregular intervals, Hetherington commenced a series of ‘Penny Papers for the People,’ at first issued daily and afterwards weekly, each being in the style of a letter addressed to the people of England, or to some individual, such as the Duke of Wellington, King George, or the Archbishop of Canterbury, and intended ‘to provide cheap political information’ of a sort not friendly to the Tory government, but in no way seditious, and in far better taste than such Tory utterances as appeared in ‘John Bull’ or ‘The Age.’ For issuing these sheets, however, without their being stamped, and also for printing and selling other revolutionary literature, he was prosecuted and fined. Thereupon, on July 9, 1831, he started ‘The Poor Man’s Guardian,’ an eight-paged quarto sheet, stated on the title to be ‘a weekly newspaper for the People, established contrary to Law, to try the power of Might against Right.’ ‘Defiance is our only remedy,’ he said in the opening page of his first number. ‘We cannot be a slave in all. We submit to much, for it is impossible to be wholly consistent ; but we will try, step by step, the power of right against might, and we will begin by protecting and upholding this grand bulwark of all our rights, this key to all our liberties, the freedom of the press—the press, too, of the ignorant and the poor.’ Reports of democratic meetings and of

¹ Linton, *James Watson*, p. 35.

acts of oppression by the government, and other items of information ostentatiously bringing 'The Poor Man's Guardian' under the definition of a newspaper, were given, and it contained strongly-worded articles and letters attacking the authorities ; but, for some time at any rate, there was nothing that could be reasonably condemned, and at no time was there anything that a prudent government would have chosen to interfere with.

Earl Grey's government, however, was hardly more prudent than the Duke of Wellington's, and 'The Poor Man's Guardian' was manifestly issued in violation of the Newspaper Stamp Act and the act of 1819. Hetherington, accordingly, was promptly prosecuted, as also were, in the course of three and a half years, upwards of eight hundred vendors of his publication, and of others started, not in rivalry with it, but to assist in the war with the authorities ; and of these about five hundred were fined, or imprisoned, or both. Hetherington himself was sent twice for terms of six months to Clerkenwell gaol, and once for twelve months to the King's Bench prison ; Carpenter was confined for six months in the King's Bench prison ; Watson for two terms of six months in Clerkenwell ; Cleave for two months in Tothill-fields ; Abel Heywood for three months in Manchester ; Mrs. Mann for three months in Leeds ; and so on. A 'victim fund' was started to defray the expenses of trials and to maintain the families of those in prison ; and all the supporters of the movement made it their business to circulate the forbidden literature. 'The Guardian' was printed surreptitiously, sold by volunteers in workshops and club-rooms, sent about the country in chests of tea, packets of shoes, and such-like parcels, and quickly brought by the persecutions into far wider circulation

than it would have had if its distributors had been left alone. Hetherington, when not in prison, 'was hunted from place to place like a wild beast, and obliged to have recourse to all kinds of manœuvres in order to see and correspond with his family'; and his comrades were driven to similar straits.¹ At length, after the hundreds of prosecutions had been carried on in the lower courts, Hetherington was brought, apparently for greater effect, before Lord Lyndhurst and a special jury in the Court of Exchequer in June 1834. He defended himself with great spirit, and to everyone's astonishment the jury returned a verdict of not guilty.² That finding, in which Lord Lyndhurst concurred, though it was evidently contrary to the letter of the law, established a precedent which public opinion approved, and nearly put an end to the persecutions that had hitherto been carried on. Hetherington immediately started a larger paper, 'The Twopenny Dispatch,' in which 'The Poor Man's Guardian' was merged at the close of the year; and by that time the market was flooded with other unstamped twopenny papers, some of them coarse and scurrilous, and all of them opposed to Lord Grey's government, which they represented as in no way better than the Tory administrations that had preceded it.

One consequence of the popularising of cheap political literature which Hetherington and his friends effected was a movement, in itself admirable, and wholly beneficial in its effects, to provide other and non-political reading at a low price for the masses. 'Chambers's Edinburgh Journal' was commenced in February 1832; and it was quickly followed by Charles Knight's

¹ Linton, pp. 2, 23, 33; Lovett, pp. 59-61; Knight Hunt, vol. ii. pp. 75-80.

² *Poor Man's Guardian*, June 21, 1834.

‘Penny Magazine,’ issued under the auspices of The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, of which Brougham, now Lord Chancellor, was president, and by several other and less successful serials of a like sort. These publications were as illegal as were Hetherington’s, and, although no reasonable person could wish them suppressed, even reasonable persons were slow in recognising the monstrous injustice of imprisoning Hetherington and his friends, and not their rivals. When, for example, a young man was charged before a magistrate in June, 1832, with selling ‘The Poor Man’s Guardian,’ that official, in committing the culprit to prison for a month, said that ‘there were many publications in circulation by the sale of which in the streets he could make out a livelihood without running the hazard of punishment ; for instance, there were “The Penny Magazine,” “The National Omnibus,” and several other useful and cheap works, which contained none of the inflammatory trash by which “The Poor Man’s Guardian” was chiefly distinguished.’ ‘This is too bad indeed !’ exclaimed Albany Fonblanque, in ‘The Examiner.’ ‘All lovers of justice must agree in reprobating the selection of a particular publication for prosecution, while others are allowed to transgress the same law with impunity. The punishment, in fact, is not for selling an unstamped paper containing news, but for expressing opinions offensive to government. The magistrate’s recommendation of “The Penny Magazine,” which is not prosecuted, and which is started by ministers, and protected by their interest in its success, is vastly significant. Justice requires that all publications contravening the law should be prosecuted, or none. The law, if good, should in every instance be rigorously enforced ; and, if not in every instance enforced, it should be repealed, or its operation

is a scandalous injustice. Journalists who obey the law are injured by those who defy it ; but we see no reason—though the solicitor of stamps and attorney-general, doubtless, do—why “ The Poor Man’s Guardian ” should be suppressed, while “ The Penny Magazine ” is suffered to poach with impunity, and recommended by magistrates on the bench as a better smuggling speculation !’¹ The authorities and the public, however, were not easily persuaded by men like Fonblanque to take that common-sense view.

‘ The Poor Man’s Guardian,’ though an average number, sold for a penny, contained very much less than one-seventh as much disloyalty, profanity, and vulgarity as could be found in an average number of ‘ John Bull ’ or ‘ The Age,’ sold for sevenpence, was certainly not as profitable reading as a number of ‘ The Penny Magazine,’ or of ‘ Chambers’s Journal,’ and Hetherington and his editors, at first Edward Mayhew, and afterwards James Bronterre O’Brien, were neither as learned nor as clever, though they may have been as honest, and were certainly as self-sacrificing, as Barnes, of ‘ The Times,’ or Black, of ‘ The Morning Chronicle ’ ; but to them and to their fellow victims is due no small share of the credit for having encouraged a taste for cheap literature, non-political as well as political, and for having shown how it could be produced. Another debt we owe to them, and a service which vastly enhanced that other service, was the speedy reduction and ultimate abolition of the stamp duty and of all other taxes on knowledge. Fonblanque and his friends were but auxiliaries in the great battle that Hetherington and his friends here won for the community.

The agitation for repeal of the stamp duty began

¹ *Examiner*, June 17, 1832.

before 'The Poor Man's Guardian' was started on the crusade by which it was made successful. Several petitions to parliament, presented by Lord Morpeth, Edward Strutt and others, obtained from Poulett Thomson, on behalf of the Duke of Wellington's government, a promise in November 1830, that a proposal for amending the Stamp Act should be brought forward before Christmas ; but Wellington's overthrow annulled that promise, and it was not repeated by Earl Grey's administration, which succeeded. Meetings were held in London and elsewhere, and petitions were presented and briefly discussed during 1831, without avail.

The first important handling of the question in the House of Commons was on June 15, 1832, three days after the hearing of the police case which has been cited. Bulwer, in an eloquent speech, then moved a resolution in favour of abolishing all taxes impeding the diffusion of knowledge, pointing out that the stamp and advertisement duties, adding to the necessary charge for newspapers at least three times as much as the money required to produce them and to yield a fair profit, tended to throw the trade into the hands of a few worthless monopolists, and, keeping sound political information out of the reach of the masses, forced them to have recourse to 'matter made level to their means, through defiance of the law, and seasoned for their passions and prejudices.' He quoted 'an intelligent mechanic,' who had said to him, 'We go to the public-house to read the sevenpenny papers, but only for the news. It is the cheap penny paper that the working man has by him to take up, and read over and over again whenever he has leisure, that forms his opinions.' If the stamp and advertisement duties were removed, Bulwer urged, much better papers than were now sold for sevenpence could be sold for twopence ; and if a fair charge was made

for postage, that alone, with the increased demand, would soon restore the balance of revenue.¹ In America, where newspapers were untaxed, and therefore cheaper, they were far more abundant than in England. Pennsylvania, with a population of 1,200,000, had a weekly supply of 300,000 papers, or one to every four inhabitants, whereas the whole United Kingdom had a weekly supply of only 638,000, or but one to every thirty-six inhabitants. It was our iniquitous stamp duty that caused this difference. 'The stamp duty,' Bulwer declared, 'checks legitimate knowledge, which is morality—the morals of a nation—but it encourages the diffusion of contraband ignorance; the advertisement duty assists our finances only by striking at that very commerce from which our finances are drawn; it cripples at once literature and trade. We have heard enough in this house of the necessity of legislating for property and intelligence, but we now feel the necessity of legislating for poverty and intelligence. At present we are acquainted with the poorer part of our fellow-countrymen only by their wrongs and murmurs, their misfortunes and their crimes. But let us at last open happier and wiser channels of communication between them and us. We have made a long and fruitless experiment of the gibbet and the hulks. In 1825 we transported 283 persons, but so vast, so rapid was our increase on this darling system of legislation, that three years afterwards, in 1828, we transported as many as 2,449. During the last three years our gaols have been sufficiently filled. We have seen enough of the effects of human ignorance. We have shed a sufficiency of human blood. Is it not time to pause? Is it not time to consider whether, as

¹ The fourpenny stamp, of course, franked papers by post; but one of the hardships of the Stamp Act was that it forced buyers to pay heavily for postage whether they wanted it or not.

Christians and as men, we have a right to correct before we attempt to instruct?' Daniel O'Connell seconded Bulwer's motion ; but Lord Althorp, on behalf of the government, opposed it as 'a proposition which he could not deny,' but 'from the affirmation of which no practical good could result,' and it was withdrawn without courting defeat by a division in an unfriendly house.¹

The turmoil incident to the passing of the Reform Bill afforded some excuse for the apathy of parliament on the newspaper stamp question in 1832 ; but the apathy continued after the turmoil was over, and it was partly due to the shortsightedness and selfishness of the proprietors of most of the high-priced papers. Among them 'The Examiner' stood almost alone in its insistence on the change which was necessary to the healthy progress of the press. The prosperous daily and weekly journals, for the most part, were willing to endure a charge which their readers could afford to pay rather than join in the popular demand for such a remission of the heavy tax as would facilitate the production of cheap papers and strengthen a rivalry that was sufficiently irritating to them while it was carried on only by law-breakers like Hetherington.

It is significant that the first concession made by the government, and obtained without much difficulty, was a reduction of the advertisement tax from three shillings and sixpence to eighteen pence in Great Britain, and from half a crown to a shilling in Ireland. This was effected in 1833, and was a great boon both to those newspapers which derived, or could expect to derive, much revenue from advertisements, and to those members of the community who found much advertising convenient or necessary. It was not of great benefit, or only indirectly beneficial, to the multitude.

¹ *Hansard's Debates*, 1832, p. 630 ; *Examiner*, June 17, 1832.

When it was ascertained, however, that the public exchequer, instead of suffering, at once gained by the reduction—the income from this source, which was 70,965*l.* for Great Britain in 1832, being 83,250*l.* in 1833¹—the reformers were furnished with a powerful argument from experience in aid of their demand for the further reversal of a penny-wise, pound-foolish, fiscal policy.

On May 22, 1834, Bulwer again raised the question in parliament. His motion, ‘That it is expedient to repeal the stamp duty on newspapers at the earliest possible period,’ was seconded by John Arthur Roebuck, whose restless mind was much exercised on the subject during these years ; but, in a languid and nearly empty house, it was supported by only fifty-eight members, and there were ninety votes against it. Fonblanque, who had objected to the reduction of the advertisement tax while the stamp duty was not touched, wrote bitterly about Bulwer’s failure. ‘The people who are craving for information,’ he said, ‘are not of the electoral body, and it is easier to vote troops to coerce them than to yield them access to knowledge by which they may guide their conduct according to the common interests of society. There are the gaol, the convict-ship, the gallows, for the errors of ignorance ; and besides these, the misery and ruin which are unseen punishments. What need then of enlightenment to prevent what there is ample provision to chastise ? Or, if the need be confessed, for the sake of humanity, yet how much greater, how much more important, the need of two or three hundred thousand pounds for the revenue ? Perish the people, so that the revenue is sustained ; and let them be as swine or as rabid brutes, so that the revenue suffers no abatement. The people are made for the revenue, and not the revenue for the people. While the

¹ Andrews, vol. ii. p. 217.

revenue furnishes bayonets, bullets, and field-pieces, what signifies the blindness of the people, and their liability to misguidance? Are there not squadrons to charge them, and artillery to sweep them down with grapeshot?'¹

A spell of Tory rule, under Sir Robert Peel's premiership, was needed to convince the Whigs, under Earl Grey and Lord Melbourne, that they had not, in passing the Reform Bill, done all the work the Radicals required of them. During 1835 there was much activity throughout the country in holding meetings and petitioning parliament in opposition to the stamp duty; and John Cleave, Hetherington's brave but rougher colleague, who had conducted an unstamped 'Weekly Police Gazette,' which continued more coarsely the work of 'The Poor Man's Guardian,' became a hero and martyr when, on February 5, 1836, he was fined 500*l.* for his law-breaking. Six days later, on February 11, Lord Melbourne, being in office again, was waited upon by a deputation of thirty members of parliament and many others, for whom Birkbeck was chief spokesman, other speakers being Hume, O'Connell, and Francis Place, the famous 'Radical tailor of Charing Cross'; and their arguments and warnings helped to frighten the government into action.² On March 15 Spring Rice, the chancellor of the exchequer, announced in the House of Commons that the long-deferred question was being considered; and on June 20 he moved 'that it is expedient that the duty now payable be reduced, and that the duty paid and payable upon every sheet whereon a newspaper is printed shall in future be one penny.'

Much opposition was offered to that proposal. Sir

¹ *England under Seven Administrations*, vol. iii. pp. 50, 51.

² Knight Hunt, vol. ii. pp. 80-86.

Charles Knightley urged that the soap duty should be reduced instead of the newspaper duty. How, he inquired, could he ask a man for his vote who was able to say to him, 'Instead of giving me the opportunity of getting clean hands for myself, and clean garments for my wife and children on a Sunday, you give me at a low price a parcel of dirty newspapers'? 'Every individual to whom parliament had given the franchise,' Charles Barclay maintained, 'already possessed ample power of reading the papers, whether at the public-houses, beershops, or coffee or public reading rooms.' Henry Goulburn, John Walter, of 'The Times,' and others, protested against a measure that could not fail to lower the character of the press, and must seriously damage the vested interests of newspapers already established. The ministerial project was acceded to, however, by a majority of 241 to 208, and the measure brought in was read a third time in the Commons, by a majority of 55 to 7, on July 25. The bill was faulty in its original shape, and it was much injured by the House of Lords; but it became law on September 15, 1836.¹ Earlier in the session, as part of the budget, the paper duty had been fixed at a uniform rate of three-halfpence a pound.

The victory thus tardily won satisfied nobody. The proprietors of the high-priced newspapers made light of the opportunity afforded them of reducing their charges by twopence a copy, and deprecated the competition that would be forced upon them by the proprietors and projectors of cheap papers. These latter reasonably complained that, though the penny secured free postage, very few of the copies issued by them would go through the post, and that they would still be compelled to charge twopence or threepence apiece

¹ Andrews, vol. ii. pp. 226-233.

for their papers, which they could only expect to sell by hundreds at that price, instead of being able to sell them by thousands for a penny or three-halfpence. Economists alleged that the revenue would suffer ; and politicians urged, with more truth, that the old grievance, whether reasonable or not, had not been removed, while a new grievance had been created.

Yet the benefits that ensued were great, and even the exchequer soon profited immensely by the change. In the half-year ending with April 5, 1837, the first in which the stamp duty was only a penny, the income from 21,362,148 stamps sold was 88,592*l.*, as against 196,909*l.* derived from 14,874,652 stamps sold at fourpence, with an allowance of twenty per cent., in the corresponding half-year, showing, on comparison of the two half-years, a loss of 108,317*l.* to the revenue, and an increase of 6,487,496 in the circulation ; and the progressive increase of circulation quickly turned the scale as regards revenue. Whereas in 1816, the first year of the fourpenny duty, the circulation had been only 22,050,354, and it was only 39,423,200 in 1836, the last year of the fourpenny duty, it reached 83,074,638 in 1846, after ten years of the penny duty. During the twenty years of the fourpenny duty the average increase each year, in spite of heavy fiscal burthens and tyrannical enforcement of tyrannical laws, had been 868,643, which may be attributed to the growth of population and spread of intelligence. During the next ten years the average yearly increase was 4,365,144, or five times the previous average, and those were years in which the fiscal burthens were still heavy, and the laws not clear of tyranny. The progress must be attributed mainly to the comparative relief from oppression and to the general improvement of society which accompanied it ; and the advance continued. In

1854, the last year but one of the compulsory penny stamp, the circulation was 122,178,507, more than a threefold growth in the course of eighteen years. Even in 1854, however, the complete enfranchisement of the press was only commencing ; and, significant as is the evidence of figures, they reveal but a small part of the record.

CHAPTER XVI.

BARNES AND HIS RIVALS.

1830-1841.

WHEN William IV. became king, Thomas Barnes was forty-five years old, and had been editor of 'The Times' for some thirteen years. Great as was the success already achieved by him in that post, and by John Walter as general controller of the business, 'The Times' was now to be a far more successful and influential paper. All through the reign of George IV., as well as during the regency, it had been a vigorous upholder of Tory politics, in the main supporting the administration of the day—whether Liverpool's, Canning's, Goderich's, or Wellington's; but it had always claimed or pretended to be independent, and especially in the later years, after Liverpool's retirement left the party in confusion, weakened by internal divisions, and only able to face the advancing tide of Radicalism by yielding sullenly and partially to its more imperious demands. So matters continued, or went on varying. The variations were more considerable, however, from the time when Earl Grey took office in the autumn of 1830, and while, with the brief interruption of Sir Robert Peel's first premiership, Lord Melbourne maintained the Whig supremacy till the autumn of 1841.

To an early stage in this period must be assigned one of Charles Greville's anecdotes. 'Le Marchant called late one night many years ago,' he wrote in 1847,

‘on Barnes at his house, and while there another visitor arrived, whom he did not see, but who was shown into another room. Barnes went to him, and after a quarter of an hour returned, when Le Marchant said, “ Shall I tell you who your visitor is ? ” Barnes said, yes, if he knew. “ Well, then, I know his step and his voice ; it is Lord Durham.” Barnes owned it was, when Le Marchant said, “ What does he come for ? ” Barnes said he came on behalf of King Leopold, who had been much annoyed by some article in “ The Times,” to entreat they would put one in of a contrary and healing description. As Le Marchant said, here was the proudest man in England come to solicit the editor of a newspaper for a crowned head ! ’¹

Before Sir Denis Le Marchant became private secretary to Brougham as lord chancellor, and before Durham was made lord privy seal under his father-in-law, Earl Grey, and therefore before either of them could wait as ministerial intermediaries on the editor of ‘ The Times,’ there had been frequent communications, of which we have seen something, between Barnes and the Tory leaders ; and those leaders were in sore straits when Barnes broke with them, and made political capital for his paper out of the popular agitation for reform which was now on foot, and which caused Grey’s displacement of Wellington as premier in November 1830. Another passage in Greville’s instructive journals illustrates the alarm and perplexity, much increased by their lack of any capable or satisfactory organ in the press, in which the Tories were now placed. ‘ Yesterday,’ Greville, who was at that time a zealous young Canningite, wrote on December 19, 1830, ‘ Mr. Stapleton, Canning’s late private secretary, called on me to discuss the subject, and the propriety and possibility of setting up some

¹ *Greville Memoirs* (Second Part), vol. iii. p. 75.

dyke to arrest the torrent of innovation and revolution that is bursting in on every side. "John Bull" alone fights the battle; but "John Bull" defends so many indefensible things, that its advocacy is not worth much. An "Anti-Radical," upon the plan of the "Anti-Jacobin," might be of some use, provided it was well sustained. I wrote a letter yesterday to Barnes, remonstrating on the general tone of "The Times," and inviting him to adopt some Conservative principles in the midst of his zeal for reform.'¹

No 'Anti-Radical' was started, and Canningite remonstrances with Barnes were futile. The Tories had to content themselves with such service as could be done to them by 'The Morning Herald' and 'The Morning Post,' by 'The Standard' as their worthiest organ, though only an evening paper, and by such disreputable weekly supporters as 'John Bull' and 'The Age.'² All through 1831 they were trying to get 'The Times' to give them at any rate some assistance. On November 21 Greville reported that his friend Henry De Ros had seen Barnes and 'opened negotiations' with him. 'Henry's object was to persuade him if possible, that the interest of the paper will be in the long run better

¹ *Greville Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 97.

² Nearly at the commencement of his premiership, Earl Grey had to complain to Sir Herbert Taylor, William IV.'s private secretary, of the way in which he suspected that people about the court, if not the king himself, were endeavouring to undermine his work by divulging cabinet secrets to Tory journalists and others. The immediate occasion was an anonymous letter he had received. 'It would not have obtained from me more attention than other anonymous letters,' he wrote, 'had I not heard of a conversation, exactly corresponding with it, which had been held at the Speaker's, in a party at which Mr. Croker and Mr. Theodore Hook were present. It had also been reported to me that several times there had appeared in *John Bull*—which I never see—details respecting the arrangements that were going on, which could not have been obtained except from persons who had accurate information respecting them. With this paper Mr. Hook is said to be connected. Mr. Croker is also said to write in it.'—*Correspondence of Earl Grey with William IV.*, vol. i.

consulted by leaning towards the side of order and quiet than by continuing to exasperate and inflame. He seemed to a certain degree moved by this argument, though he is evidently a desperate Radical.’¹

Barnes was one of those discreet editors who set policy before principle, and subordinate their own opinions to the interests they are paid to serve. He did his work well, and with comparatively few blunders, and it may be taken for granted that, like most of the men placed in similar positions, and fitting into them in similar ways, he gradually came to hold views and to follow lines that were at first impossible or uncongenial to him. But it is likely enough that his personal sympathies were still with the reformers, and that he had kindly recollections of the time when he was really ‘a desperate Radical’—the schoolfellow and the fellow-worker on ‘The Examiner’ of Leigh Hunt, and the friend of Shelley, Hazlitt, and others. He never quarrelled with his old comrades, though circumstances forced him far away from their company.

During more than the first year of Earl Grey’s administration, all through the discussion on the first and second of its Reform Bills, and till the time when the third bill had nearly passed the committee stage in the House of Commons, ‘The Times’ was stoutly ministerialist. As early as January 1831 it was understood by the knowing ones that it was receiving private information from Lord Grey;² and such information continued to be supplied as often as there was occasion for it, and to be used in emphasising articles in support of the government, till the spring of 1832. When, on February 29, much commotion was caused by the premature appearance in ‘The Times’ of extracts from a letter of Lord Harrowby’s to Lord Grey,

¹ *Greville Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 214.

² *Croker Papers*, vol. ii. p. 118.

Greville wrote: 'I have little doubt that this, as well as former extracts, came from the shop of Durham and Co., and so Melbourne told me he thought likewise.' 'Day after day "The Times" puts forth paragraphs evidently manufactured in the Durham shop,' Greville added on March 6. 'Yesterday there was one which exhibited their mortification and rage so clearly as to be quite amusing—praising the duke and the Tories, and abusing Harrowby and Wharncliffe and the Moderates.' That last sentence, however, shows that a change, not apprehended by Greville, had already begun. It was not 'Durham and Co.,' but the Duke of Wellington and the Tories that 'The Times' wanted to please by its attack on Lord Harrowby and the Moderates.¹ "'The Times," yesterday and the day before,' Greville wrote on the 9th, 'attacked Lord Grey with a virulence and indecency about the peers that is too much even for those who take the same line, and he now sees where his subserviency to the press has conducted him.'²

The precise reasons for that sudden turning round have not been disclosed; but they can easily be guessed. John Walter, the principal proprietor of 'The Times,' was now about to enter parliament, and, though he never called himself a Tory, all his leanings were towards Toryism, and the threat to swamp the House of Lords with Whig peers in order to pass the Reform Bill, which was now being uttered and discussed in the inner political and courtly circles, frightened many besides Lord Wharncliffe. Henceforth 'The Times,' though it only occasionally denounced the ministerial policy, gave no more support to Earl Grey's administration than it had given to the Duke of Wellington's. Of its attitude when a measure of such importance as Lord Grey's Irish Coercion Bill was before parliament,

¹ *Greville Memoirs*, vol. ii. pp. 264, 266.

² *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 267.

and of the control which it exercised over divided public opinion, and all the more successfully, perhaps, because of its claim to independence, striking illustration is furnished by Greville. 'The government,' he wrote on February 27, 1833, 'assumes a high tone, but is not at all certain of its ability to pass the Coercion Bills unaltered, and yesterday there appeared an article in "The Times" in a style of lofty reproof and severe admonition which was no doubt as appalling as it was meant to be. This article made what is called a great sensation. Always struggling, as this paper does, to take the lead of public opinion, and watching all its turns and shifts with perpetual anxiety, it is at once regarded as undoubted evidence of its direction, and dreaded for the influence which its powerful writing and extensive sale have placed in its hands. It is no small homage to the power of the press to see that an article like this makes as much noise as the declaration of a powerful minister or a leader of opposition could do in either house of parliament.'¹

When Earl Grey, thwarted by his own colleagues, and especially by his son-in-law, Lord Durham, in his Irish coercion policy, resigned the premiership in July, 1834, to be succeeded for a term of only four months by Lord Melbourne, 'The Times,' foreseeing and hastening the end, was bolder and more persistent in its attacks, and these for some time were especially directed against Lord Brougham, who, though he had been for a long time a regular contributor to its columns, was in no way spared on that account. The special occasion was the very foolish and vain-glorious conduct of Brougham during a tour of holiday-making and speech-making in Scotland. 'For some weeks past,' Greville reported on September 18, 'a fierce war has been waged by "The

¹ *Greville Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 362.

"Times" against the chancellor. It was declared in some menacing articles which soon swelled into a tone of rebuke, and have since sharpened into attacks of a constancy, violence, and vigour quite unexampled. All the power of writing which the paper can command—argument, abuse, and ridicule—have been heaped day after day upon him, and when it took a little breathing time it filled up the interval by quotations from other papers, which have been abundantly supplied both by the London and the country press. I do not yet know what are the secret causes which have stirred the wrath of "The Times." "The Examiner" has once a week thrown into the general contribution of rancour an article perhaps wittier and more pungent than any which have appeared in "The Times"; but between them they have flagellated him till he is raw, and it is very clear that he feels it quite as acutely as they can desire.¹

One of the 'secret causes' of 'the wrath of "The Times"' which Greville had not fathomed was afterwards explained, not very adequately, in a curious way. A clerk in the lord chancellor's court, we are told, one morning saw Brougham reading a letter, which he presently tore up and threw on the floor. The treacherous clerk picked up the fragments and pieced them together, showing the letter to be as follows:—

DEAR BROUGHAM,—What I want to see you about is 'The Times': whether we are to make war on it or come to terms.

Yours ever,

ALTHORP.

This document, it is added, found its way to Printing House Square, and gave such offence to Barnes or Walter that 'The Times' proceeded to 'make war' without recognising an alternative. In its condemnation of Brougham it predicted that 'Lord Melbourne would soon find him out, as the honest men of the

¹ *Greville Memoirs*, vol. iii. p. 133.

community were an overmatch for the knaves'; and the only excuse it allowed for him was that he was mad, 'under a morbid excitement seldom evinced by those of his majesty's subjects who are suffered to remain masters of their own actions.'

'The Examiner' had better excuse than 'The Times' for attacking Lord Brougham, whose arrogance and vanity were always obnoxious to Fonblanque, and who was now making unusual exhibition of these qualities. Brougham had met Earl Grey at a great banquet in Edinburgh, and had then exclaimed in insulting allusion to his former chief, '*These hands are pure!* In taking office, in holding office, in retaining office, I have sacrificed no feeling of a public nature, I have deserted no friend, I have abandoned no principle, I have forfeited no pledge, I have done no job, I have promoted no unworthy man, to the best of my knowledge; I have not abused the ear of my royal master, and I have not deserted the cause of the people.' This utterance prompted Fonblanque to insert in 'The Examiner' a rhymed 'Letter from a Gentleman who travels for a large Establishment to one of his Employers, Mr. William King':—

Dear sir, the account here forwarded
Of favours since the 4th
Presents a very handsome stroke
Of business in the North.
Our firm's new style don't take at all,
So thought the prudent thing
Would be to cultivate the old
Established name of King.

If any friend attention shows,
And asks me out to dine
When company my health propose,
In toddy or in wine,
My heart's eternal gratitude
About their ears I ding
With, 'Be assured I'll mention this
Next post to Mr. King!'

I met with Grey the other day,
Who since he left the firm,
Has travelled on his own account,
And done, I fear, some harm ;
So thought it right, where'er he went,
To whisper round the ring,
' Perhaps you don't know *how* he lost
The confidence of King.'

It is probable, however, that Brougham made no objection to the 'flagellation' of 'The Times' or 'The Examiner.' Publicity of any sort was delightful to him, and, in default of other people's abuse, he publicly quarrelled with himself. It was somewhat before this time that, as we are told, Barnes called one day on the lord chancellor, and, while waiting in a private room till his contributor had left the bench, took up a copy of 'The Morning Chronicle,' in which he read an article demolishing one that had appeared in 'The Times' of the previous day. Barnes recognised the style. 'Well,' he said, when Brougham came to him, 'it is almost too bad of you to demolish yourself in this way'; and the chancellor, finding evasion useless, had to admit that he had earned a double fee with truly lawyer-like impartiality.¹

Less than two months after the furious attacks upon him had appeared in 'The Times,' Brougham had the credit of rendering it some service, by an act that spoilt his chance of ever being lord chancellor again. When, on November 14, Lord Melbourne tendered his resignation to the king, he did so without consulting his colleagues, and did not even take the trouble to inform them on the same evening, except that, as Greville reports, he mentioned the important fact to Brougham, who happened to call upon him ; 'but made him promise not to say a word of it to anybody.' Brougham

¹ Knight Hunt, vol. ii. p. 177.

‘promised, and the moment he quitted the house went to “The Times” office, and told them what had occurred.’¹

‘The Times’ of November 15 contained this startling paragraph : ‘We have no authority for the important statement which follows, but we have every reason to believe that it is perfectly true. We give it without any comment or explanation, in the very words of the communication which reached us at a late hour last night. “The king has taken the opportunity of Lord Spencer’s death to turn out the ministry, and there is every reason to believe that the Duke of Wellington has been sent for. The queen has done it all.”’ Apart from the impropriety of announcing Lord Melbourne’s resignation in ‘The Times’ before he had communicated it to his colleagues,² the offence of the paragraph was in its last sentence. Queen Adelaide, with her imperious bearing, her extravagant habits, and her scheming ways, had always been a more difficult person for ministers to deal with than her husband ; but to throw public blame on her was an intolerable outrage. While the Duke of Wellington, having hurried up from Brighton in obedience to the royal summons, was urging the king to retain the Melbourne administration, Sir Herbert Taylor burst into the room, and showed ‘The Times’ article to the king. ‘There, duke,’ said his majesty, ‘you see how I am insulted and betrayed. Nobody in London but Melbourne knew last night what had taken place

¹ *Greville Memoirs*, vol. iii. p. 144. *The Examiner* and other papers confirm Greville’s account. Croker, however (*Papers*, vol. ii. p. 246), said it was ‘Bear’ Allen who played the traitor.

² ‘When Lord Holland saw the papers next morning,’ Croker reported (*Papers*, vol. ii. p. 246), ‘he said “Well, here’s another hoax !” Lord Lansdowne equally disbelieved it, and I believe one or two others of the cabinet also learnt the dissolution from the newspapers. How like Melbourne all this is !’

here, nor of my sending for you. Will your grace compel me to take back people who have treated me in this way?'¹ Melbourne had to be recalled only five months later; but Brougham was not reinstated in the lord chancellorship.

While Wellington was preparing to take office, with Peel as premier, his friends were busily arranging for 'The Times' to be the thoroughgoing champion of their policy. 'I asked the duke if he had seen "The Times" this morning?' Greville wrote on November 17. 'He said no, and I told him there appeared in it a considerable disposition to support the new government, and I thought it would be very desirable to obtain that support, if it could be done. He said that he was aware he had formerly too much neglected the press, but he did not think "The Times" could be influenced. I urged him to avail himself of any opportunity to try, and he seemed very well disposed to do so.' On the same day Greville gave similar advice to Lord Lyndhurst. 'He said he desired nothing so much, but in his situation he did not like personally to interfere, nor to place himself in their power. I told him I had some acquaintance with Barnes, the editor of the paper, and would find out what he was disposed to do, and would let him know, which he entreated me I would.'²

The negotiations that ensued lasted more than a fortnight, and tried the diplomatic skill of several busy politicians. 'In consequence of what passed between Lyndhurst and me concerning "The Times,"' Greville reported on November 19, 'I made Henry De Ros send for Barnes (who had already at his suggestion adopted a conciliatory and amiable tone towards the embryo government), who came and put on paper the terms on

¹ McCullagh Torrens, *Memoirs of Lord Melbourne*, vol. ii. p. 44.

² *Greville Memoirs*, vol. iii. pp. 149, 151.

which he would support the duke. These were, no mutilation of the Reform Bill, and the adoption of those measures of reform which had been already sanctioned by votes of the House of Commons last session with regard to church and corporations, and no change in our foreign policy. I have sent his note to Lyndhurst, and begged him to call here and talk the matter over.' 'Lyndhurst has just been here,' it was added later in the same day. 'He had seen the duke, who had already opened a negotiation with Barnes through Scarlett. I offered to get any statement inserted of the causes of the late break-up, and he will again see the duke and consider the propriety of inserting one. He said, "Why, Barnes is the most powerful man in the country." "The Standard" has sent to offer its support. The duke said he should be very happy; but they must understand that the government was not yet formed.' 'The Standard' might be played with, but not 'The Times.' 'This morning,' Greville wrote on November 23, 'I received a note from Henry De Ros, enclosing one from Barnes, who was evidently much nettled at not having received any specific answer to his note stating the terms on which he would support the duke. Henry was disconcerted also, and instructed me to have an explanation with Lyndhurst. I accordingly went to the Court of Exchequer, where he was sitting, and waited till he came out, when I gave him these notes to read. He took me away with him, and stopped at the Home Office to see the duke and talk with him on the subject; for he was evidently a little alarmed, so great and dangerous a potentate is the wielder of the thunders of the press.' Wellington promised to consult Peel, and on the following day communications were made to Barnes, with which he declared himself 'quite satisfied.' 'Barnes is to dine

with Lyndhurst,' it was noted on November 26, 'and a gastronomic ratification will wind up the treaty between these high contracting parties.' The new lord chancellor's zeal, however, seems to have outrun his discretion. 'The dinner that Lyndhurst gave to Barnes,' Greville recorded on December 5, 'has made a great uproar, as I thought it would. I never could understand the chancellor's making such a display of this connection; but, whatever he may be, he is a lawyer, and how great soever in his wig, I suspect that he is deficient in knowledge of the world, and those nice calculations of public taste and opinion which are only acquired by intuitive sagacity exercised in the daily communion of social life.' Yet all ended happily, for the time being. Our last note is dated December 6: 'Lyndhurst is doing all he can to draw closer the connection between "The Times" and the government, and communicates constantly with Barnes.'¹

The Tory ministry that the Duke of Wellington patched up, with Sir Robert Peel as its head and Barnes as its mouthpiece, lasted barely more than three months, and, though the readers of 'The Times' were not informed of the curious arrangements that had been made for their instruction or beguiling, many of them shook their heads and chose other political guides even before the crisis came. '"The Times" has made a sad blunder,' Rintoul wrote in 'The Spectator,' 'in going over to the Tories. It has been playing for once a losing game, and we cannot say that it has played with its usual ability and spirit.' 'Never was there a more complete failure,' he added, referring to the administration of 1828-30, 'than the attempt of "The Times" to induce the public to believe that the duke's ministry would be a reform ministry,' and it had been losing

¹ *Greville Memoirs*, vol. iii. pp. 149, 151, 155, 158, 159, 169, 171.

ground ever since, erring in its languid support of the Grey administration, and yet more in its reckless attack on the Melbourne administration and its reckless defence of the Peel administration. 'It became decidedly more subservient as the cabinet grew more and more Orange; and it is now the rankest Conservative of all the journals. It adopts the old Tory theory of "saving the people from themselves," and is full of abuse and detraction of the men who have not changed in any particular from what they were when cheered on and lauded by "The Times." Within a few weeks, and while the whole country was staring at a change more extraordinary than any which the wooden sword of Harlequin has achieved this Christmas, "The Times," that boasts of leading three-fourths of the people of England in their opinions, has taken up and supported two opposite systems of politics. The effect of this remarkable tergiversation is evident in the leading articles of the paper. They are impudent without being energetic, and abusive but not vigorous.'

¹

There was some jealousy in those strictures, but they were true in the main. Although the articles in 'The Times' of George IV.'s and William IV.'s days are tedious reading now, they were evidently well suited to the taste of the majority of those to whom they were addressed, and for whom Rintoul's articles were too sedate and Fonblanque's too brilliant. The more important of them were written by Edward Sterling, who was still, as he had been for twenty years, the chief 'thunderer' of 'The Times.' 'An amazingly impetuous, hasty, explosive man, this Captain Whirlwind! — a remarkable man, and playing, especially in those years 1830-40, a remarkable part in the world,' said Thomas Carlyle, who knew him well, but attributed

¹ *Spectator*, January 3, 1835.

to him too much authority in directing the policy that he enforced. That policy was directed by Barnes, at the bidding of Walter, and only propounded in boisterous words by Sterling. Yet Carlyle's description or apology is interesting. 'The sudden changes of doctrine in "The Times," which failed not to excite loud censure and indignant amazement in those days,' he says, 'were first intelligible to you when you came to interpret them as his changes. These sudden whirls from east to west on his part, and total changes of party and articulate opinion at a day's warning, lay in the nature of the man, and could not be helped; products of his fiery impatience, of the combined impetuosity and limitation of an intellect which did nevertheless gravitate towards what was loyal, and true, and right on all manner of subjects. Thus, if he stormed along, ten thousand strong, in the time of the Reform Bill, indignantly denouncing Toryism and its obsolete, insane pretensions, and then if, after some experience of Whig management, he discerned that Wellington and Peel, by whatever name entitled, were the men to be depended on by England, there lay in all this, visible enough, a deeper consistency, far more important than the superficial one so much clamoured after by the vulgar.'¹ Sterling doubtless satisfied himself that the divers and diverse opinions he gave utterance to at various times were all sound at the moment of writing, and he may have not only thought them really his own, but also spiced them with his strong individuality; but we must accept as truthful the statement which he made, when put upon his honour, in reply to a charge brought against him as part editor of 'The Times,' by Roebuck. 'I never have been technically or morally connected in any manner with the editorship of "The

¹ Carlyle, *Life of John Sterling*, pp. 302-304.

Times,"' he wrote on June 27, 1835, 'not possessing over the course or choice of its politics any power or influence whatever, nor, by consequence, being responsible for its acts.'¹

If Sterling as leader-writer, or Barnes as editor, or Walter as manager-in-chief, acted indiscreetly, and really injured 'The Times' in trying to serve it, by the violent support given to the luckless Tory administration of 1835, and if the business in which they were severally concerned was blameworthy, there is all the more reason for quoting a remarkable letter which Sir Robert Peel, on April 18, the very day on which his first premiership ended, addressed to the editor of 'The Times,' and which Barnes handed on to Sterling for his consolation. Its purport was honourable both to Peel and to his champions on 'The Times.' 'If I do not offer the expressions of personal gratitude,' he wrote, in acknowledging the 'powerful support' he had received, 'it is because I feel that such expressions would do injustice to the character of a support which was given exclusively on the highest and most independent grounds of public principle. I can say this with perfect truth, as I am addressing one whose person even is unknown to me, and who, during my tenure of power, studiously avoided every species of intercourse which could throw a suspicion upon the motives by which he was actuated. I should, however, be doing injustice to

¹ Note to *The Dorchester Labourers*, p. 16, in Roebuck's series of *Pamphlets for the People*. 'Some time since,' Roebuck had written, 'I was in the habit of meeting Mr. Sterling in society, and was not a little amused by the charlatan game he played to hide his editorship of *The Times*. If anyone had assumed the fact, he would have taken it as an affront. There was a painful resemblance between this man's position and that of a bravo spy in Venice. They both had a secret and irresistible power—the one slew you, the other merely ruined your reputation.'—*The Stamped Press of London, and its Morality*, p. 5, in Roebuck's *Pamphlets for the People*.

my own feelings if I were to retire from office without one word of acknowledgment, without at least assuring you of the admiration with which I witnessed during the arduous contest in which I was engaged, the daily exhibition of that extraordinary ability to which I was indebted for a support the more valuable because it was an impartial and discriminating support.' ¹

Peel, we may safely assume, was not in the mood to address similar language to the writers of 'The Times' seven or eight years later, when he was in office again, and at this time an object not of praise but of abuse. He was never, however, attacked with such coarseness as was applied in 1835 and 1836 to Daniel O'Connell. 'The Times' of November 26, 1835, contained these lines about the Irish liberator :

Scum condensed of Irish bog,
Ruffian, coward, demagogue,
Boundless liar, base detractor,
Nurse of murders, treason's factor !
Spout thy filth, diffuse thy slime,
Slander is in thee no crime.
Safe from challenge, safe from law,
Who can curb thy callous jaw ?
Who would sue a convict liar ?
On a poltroon who would fire ?

Plenty of insult like that, in prose if not in verse, was hurled at O'Connell by 'The Times,' of which, for a long while, he took no notice. At length, in September 1836, O'Connell having unwisely hinted in parliament that he could, if he chose, disclose

¹ Carlyle, p. 306. Barnes seems to have been outrageously Tory in his opinions at this time. On January 7, Greville (*Memoirs*, vol. iii. p. 188) received a letter from him, 'in which he speaks with horror and alarm of the prevailing spirit. He says the people are deaf with passion, and in the abrupt dissolution of the late government, and the bad composition of this, will see a conspiracy against their liberties, and, mad and preposterous as the idea is, there is no eradicating it from their brains.'

matters discreditable to the private character of Lord Lyndhurst, 'The Times' wrote thus: 'What an unredeemed and unredeemable scoundrel is this O'Connell to make such a threat, and at such a time too! If he has not lied more foully than it would have entered into the imagination of the devil himself to lie, he makes the threat with his own wife dying under his very eyes! O, how long shall such a wretch as this be tolerated among civilised men! But let him mark us well—as surely as he dares to invade the privacy of the life of Lord Lyndhurst, or of any other man, woman, or child that may happen by themselves or their relatives to be opposed to him in politics, so surely will we carry the war into his own domiciles at Darrynane and Dublin, and show up the whole brood of O'Connells, young and old.' That paragraph, illustrative of journalism at its worst—in the columns of a newspaper like 'The Times' at any rate—just before the reign of Queen Victoria began, provoked a rejoinder from O'Connell of which a part is worth quoting. 'It is an exquisite specimen,' he wrote, 'of that party to whose base passions you are the mercenary panderers. Of course it is not my purpose to bandy words with creatures so contemptible as you are. Your rascality is purely venal, and has no more of individual malignity in it than inevitably belongs to beings who sell their souls to literary assassination, and who from their nature would be actual assassins if they lived at the period of history when the wages of villains of that description bore a reasonable proportion to the hire you receive for a different, only because a bloodless atrocity.' Much more followed in neglect of O'Connell's proposal not to 'bandy words' with his traducers, and he concluded, 'I do not condescend one remark on the turpitude of the party to which "The Times" is now attached, and whose patronage it

earns by a political and personal meanness hitherto unknown in the history of British literature. You have made literary vileness a byword. It is really discreditable to Britain that it should be known that so much atrocity, so depraved, so unprincipled a vileness as "The Times" has exhibited, should have found any countenance or support.'¹ O'Connell's language is not to be justified, nor is that of 'The Times'; and this altercation is noteworthy as an incident in the centuries-long quarrel between English and Irish politicians which is not yet quite finished.

'The Times,' fortunately, did not profit by such violence, and the loss of influence and circulation incurred by its outrageous advocacy of Tory views at a time when the Whigs were unpopular because of their apathy about reform brought corresponding advantage to its chief rival, with the exception of 'The Standard,' among the daily papers. 'Now,' said John Black, of 'The Morning Chronicle,' 'our readers will follow me wherever I like to lead them.'²

Black did not like, however, or was not permitted to lead his readers very far. The 'Chronicle,' in which he had been able during more than a dozen years to propound nearly as much Radicalism as he chose, but which he had allowed to sink into somewhat humdrum ways, had fallen off considerably, and had only a daily sale of about 1,000 copies in 1834, when William Clement sold it for 16,500*l.*—scarcely more than a third as much as he had paid for it in 1821—to Sir John Easthope, a stockbroker, and two others who had smaller shares, Simon McGillivray, a retired merchant, and James Duncan, a publisher. Much fresh business

¹ R. Barry O'Brien, *Fifty Years of Concessions to Ireland*, vol. i. pp. 512-514.

² *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. v. p. 109.

enterprise was thrown into it, and in the course of five years its circulation was raised to about 6,000 ; but it was now converted into a Whig organ.¹ 'The Whigs set to work,' said Greville, 'and Hobhouse, Normanby, Poulett Thomson, Le Marchant, and several others wrote day after day a succession of good articles, which soon renovated the paper and set it on its legs.' The best articles, probably, were written by Albany Fonblanque, who was induced to furnish a column a week for fifteen guineas ;² but Fonblanque was crippled by the political restraints imposed upon him, and the paper, approved by the Whigs, lost favour with the Radicals. 'While we recognise the same want of vigour, compression, and method by which "The Chronicle" has for a long time been characterised,' Rintoul complained a few months after the change had been made, 'we miss the philosophy, the sagacity, and the curious reading which were wont to compensate for the defects of execution. There seems to be no unity of purpose, no presiding mind. Antagonistic principles, irreconcilable opinions, jostle each other on the same page.'³

Coarser blame of 'The Chronicle' was often uttered by others, as when 'The Times' spoke of its rival as 'a disgraceful morning print, which, made up of such contributions as the licentiousness and leisure of stock-jobbing may furnish, actually feeds on falsehood and lies so largely day by day that one might think that in its case "increase of appetite had grown by what it fed on."' On the very day on which that abuse of the 'Chronicle' was printed by 'The Times' (June 13,

¹ Charles Mackay, *Forty Years' Recollections*, vol. i. p. 71 ; Greville *Memoirs* (Second Part), vol. i. p. 179.

² Mackay, *Forty Years' Recollections*, vol. i. p. 82.

³ *Spectator*, January 3, 1835.

1835), the 'Chronicle' declared that 'the poor old "Times," in its imbecile ravings, resembles those unfortunate wretches whose degraded prostitution is fast approaching neglect and disgust.' Such spiteful and vulgar language, however, was only a survival from the bad manners of a former day, and more common in papers like 'John Bull' than in those read by respectable people.¹

Edward Sterling's denial that he had any power or responsibility as editor of 'The Times' was provoked by an intemperate and malicious pamphlet in which, in January 1835, Roebuck accused Black of 'The Chronicle,' and Fonblanque of 'The Examiner,' as well as Sterling, of propping up the stamp duty—an allegation which was quite untrue in Fonblanque's case—and of many other offences.² Sterling and Fonblanque contented themselves with stoutly contradicting the charges and calling for ample apology, which they received; but Black, whom Roebuck further attacked in other

¹ A few other samples may be given. *The Times*, on June 16, 1832, called *The Standard* 'a stupid and priggish print, which never by any chance deviates into candour'; and on August 22 in the same year *The Standard* talked of 'the filthy falsehood and base insinuation put forward by *The Times*.' *The Times* on one occasion described *The Chronicle* as 'that squirt of filthy water,' and *The Morning Post* was, in the judgment of *The Chronicle*, 'that slop-pail of corruption.' *The Courier* was, according to *The Morning Herald*, 'that spavined old hack'; and *The Globe* was, according to *The Standard*, 'our blubber-headed contemporary.' *The Age* of May 4, 1838, had two characteristic paragraphs: 'It is actually impossible to express the unmixed disgust with which we have read a series of beastly attacks upon his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland in that most filthy of all filthy papers, the old *Times*'; and 'Old Jerry Bentham's paper, *The Globe*, is, we perceive, in high dudgeon with us for calling Mr. Peel a rat. It adds that we have designated Lord Lyndhurst a rat also. To the first we answer, no one but such an old dotard as the author of "Chrestomathia" doubts it: and to the last, that it was not we, but *Cobbett*, Jerry's old friend the bone-grabber, who christened the lord chancellor Rat Copley.'

² Roebuck, *The Stamped Press of London, and its Morality*.

pamphlets, challenged his slanderer to a duel—perhaps the last instance among Englishmen, or rather Scotchmen, of resort to this mode of settling journalistic quarrels. The duel came off in November, when Black, with McGillivray as his second, went down to Christchurch, in Hampshire, and there twice exchanged shots with Roebuck; but neither party was hurt, and peace was concluded over a jorum of toddy.¹

Black, though Barnes's senior by only two years, was an editor of an older school, and found it difficult to maintain the competition of 'The Chronicle' with 'The Times' with such fresh vigour as was required of him by Sir John Easthope. He acquitted himself well in it, however. With ampler funds at his disposal, he increased his staff of writers, besides making use of all the amateur and not always helpful help afforded him by the leading Whig politicians, both before and after Lord Melbourne's return to office.² Charles Buller and Lord Holland were frequent contributors, and occasional articles came from many others. Joseph Parkes, the parliamentary agent of the Whigs, was a constant visitor at Black's dingy office in the Strand. 'Every eminent man in the wide world of British and Irish

¹ Mackay, *Forty Years' Recollections*, vol. i. p. 90.

² 'I remember once, when assistant sub-editor of *The Morning Chronicle*,' says Dr. Charles Mackay (*Through the Long Day*, vol. i. p. 52), 'that I waited on the Duke of Sussex at the Hyde Park Hotel, where he was resident for a few days, with the proof of a leading article which he had either written or dictated. The duke was an earnest and consistent Whig, and had fallen into disfavour with his royal father and with George IV. I do not at this distance of time remember the subject of the royal article, except that it was in support of some Liberal measure, and that the style was crude and involved. I remember well that the proof was a rough one, and contained several grammatical as well as literal errors that required correction. I also remember that the duke detected the errors very readily, but that he was not able to correct them *secundum artem*, and that he had ultimately to ask me to show him how to make such technical marks as would be understood in the printing office.'

politics sought his aid,' we are told, 'and he kept the secrets entrusted to him with scrupulous fidelity.'¹ Paying special attention to foreign affairs, he appointed Michael Joseph Quin as foreign editor of the 'Chronicle,' and Eyre Evans Crowe was sent to France as its Paris correspondent. George Hogarth was sub-editor for some time until, on Hogarth's being made musical and theatrical editor, and also editor of 'The Evening Chronicle,' started in 1837, the post was filled in succession by John Payne Collier, James Fraser, and Charles Mackay—the latter being preferred to Thackeray, who wrote art criticisms and was a candidate for more constant employment.² Among the reporters were William Hazlitt the younger and Charles Dickens, whose father had for a long time been connected with the paper. Dickens, commencing his literary career as reporter for 'The True Sun,' and working during two years for 'The Mirror of Parliament,' went to 'The Chronicle' in 1835, when he was twenty-three, and soon became its most zealous agent in the reporting of country meetings and important occurrences. 'There never was anybody connected with newspapers who in the same space of time had so much express and post-chaise experience as I,' he wrote in the course of a lively account of his adventures, in rushing across country, writing his articles as he travelled, and often breaking down on the way, and being hard pushed to reach London in time to supply the printers with copy and to be rewarded 'with never-to-be-forgotten compliments by the late Mr. Black, coming in the broadest of Scotch from the broadest of hearts I ever knew.' Dickens fully earned his five guineas a week, and also the two guineas extra that were allowed to him for

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1855, p. 211.

² Mackay, *Through the Long Day*, vol. i. pp. 55, 56.

some of the 'Sketches by Boz,' of which two or three a week appeared in 'The Evening Chronicle' after 1837.¹

Of Black and his contributors many anecdotes are told;² but the most memorable refers to an interview he had with Lord Melbourne while the Whigs were in office. 'Mr. Black,' said the premier, at the close of a long conversation on political affairs, 'you are the only person who comes to see me who forgets who I am. You forget that I am prime minister.' Black opened his eyes, coloured up, and was stammering out a question as to the way in which he had offended, when Melbourne proceeded, 'Everybody else takes special care to remember it, but I wish they would forget it, for they only remember it to ask for places and favours. Now, Mr. Black, you never ask me for anything, and I wish you would; for, seriously, I should be most happy to do anything in my power to serve you.' 'I am truly obliged to you,' answered Black, 'but I don't want anything. I am editor of "The Morning Chronicle;" I like my business, and I live happily on my income.' 'Then, by God, I envy you!' exclaimed the premier, 'and you are the only man I ever did.'³

Black's philosophy was put to the test in 1843,

¹ Forster, *Life of Charles Dickens*, vol. i. pp. 75, 76, 79, 84.

² See especially Dr. Mackay's *Forty Years' Recollections, and Through the Long Day*, and Grant's *Newspaper Press*. 'Black's rooms,' we are told (*Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1855, p. 211), 'were so encumbered with books, both on the walls and on the floor—the gleanings of some half a century—that it was difficult to walk through them. At one time the pair was obliged to creep into bed at the end, the bedsides being piled with dirty volumes of divinity and politics, and defying entrance in any other way; for it was one of the editor's peculiarities that he would not have his books moved or dusted by any hand but his own.' Mrs. Black was 'something like Meg Merrilies in person.' Black's dog, Cato, was nearly as great an object of interest and affection to his friends as the eccentric, but kind-hearted and high-minded, editor himself.

³ *Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1855, p. 213. Some time before, when Melbourne was not allowed to make Sydney Smith a bishop, he had vowed that he would put Black into lawn before he died.

when he was summarily dismissed by Sir John Easthope, whose daughter had lately married Andrew Doyle, then foreign editor of 'The Morning Chronicle,' and who wanted the post for his son-in-law. By selling the enormous library he had collected, and in other ways, Black raised an annuity of 150*l.*, with which, at the age of sixty, he retired to a small house on the Thames that his old friend Walter Coulson assigned to him at a nominal rent, and there he died in 1855.¹

Difficulties in the management of the paper had arisen as far back as March 1839. 'They are in a great rage and no small dismay at the same time,' Greville then wrote concerning the official Whigs, 'at the conduct of "The Morning Chronicle," which has turned half against them in a most extraordinary manner; that is, it is urging the Radicals to seize this opportunity of compelling the government to go their lengths, and to make such compliance the condition of their support. Government are so indignant that they want to break off with "The Chronicle" altogether, but then they will be left in the awkward predicament of having no morning paper whatever in their service. What nettles them the more is that they made "The Chronicle" what it is, and raised it by their exertions from the lowest ebb to its present very good circulation. Easthope makes a clear 10,000*l.* a year by the speculation; but now, seeing or thinking he sees greater advantages to be got by floating down the Radical stream than by

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1855, p. 213. 'I am deeply grieved about Black,' Dickens wrote to John Forster on May 3, 1843; 'sorry from my heart's core. If I could find him out I would go and comfort him this moment.' Some comfort was offered in the shape of a dinner at Greenwich, at which Black was the guest of Dickens, Thackeray, Fonblanque, Sheil, Charles Buller, Southwood Smith, W. J. Fox, Macready, Maclise, and Forster. (Forster, *Life of Charles Dickens*, vol. ii. pp. 31, 32.)

assisting in the defence of this government, he forgets past favours and connection, and is ready to abandon them to their fate. It is rather an ominous sign, and marks strongly their falling estimation. They think it is Durham who has got hold of Easthope and persuades him to take this course. He declares he is so beset with applications, advice, and threats, that he has no alternative, and must take the line he does or ruin the sale of his paper.’¹ If Easthope made the change from policy or under pressure, we may be quite sure that Black cheerfully agreed to it on the score of principle.

It was no easy matter to support the Whig administration during the six years following Sir Robert Peel’s defeat in April 1835. The Whigs in the House of Commons, who really approved of Lord Melbourne’s shilly-shallying, do-nothing policy were but half as numerous as the Tories, who, divided among themselves, united in opposing it; and the government had to steer its perilous course by constant tackings, in which it alternately used Tory help to thwart the Radicals, who were far stronger in this parliament than in any previous one, and the Liberals, as many Whig sympathisers with Radicalism now called themselves, and made such grudging concessions to the Radicals and Liberals as were necessary to secure their aid in keeping the Tories out of office. In this tedious and discreditable process the Radicals gained some things, including the reduction of the newspaper stamp duty in 1836, and several social reforms, such as the lessening of death penalties and other improvements in the administration of justice, the suppression of the slave trade, and the establishment of the penny post; and it was for the sake of reforms like these that independent Radicals, among whom Albany Fonblanque was foremost in journalism, gave qualified

¹ *Greville Memoirs* (Second Part), vol. i. p. 179.

support to the Melbourne administration. But the line taken by Fonblanque in 'The Examiner' could not be taken, or could only be taken cautiously and spasmodically, by Black and his writers in 'The Morning Chronicle,' so long as it professed to be a ministerial organ. The advantages accruing to 'The Chronicle' as a semi-official journal were of doubtful value, and, standing alone among the morning papers, its embarrassments were to some extent shared by its friendly rivals in the evening press.

Of these there were now five, three of them being very ably conducted on different liberal levels. 'The Globe,' still in the hands of Colonel Robert Torrens, took precedence as the recognised channel for ministerial communications, especially favoured by Lord John Russell. 'The Sun,' being under no restraint, and with Murdo Young for its enterprising conductor, was bolder in its politics. Yet bolder was 'The True Sun,' which, like 'The Sun,' had ceased to be a mouthpiece of Toryism, and was at this time owned by Daniel Whittle Harvey, and edited by William Johnson Fox, who was also one of the writers for 'The Morning Chronicle.' 'The Evening Chronicle' was shortlived; and 'The Courier,' though now claiming to be Liberal, was of too uncertain politics and of too small circulation to be of any account.

The Tories had 'The Standard' as their only and sufficient champion among the evening papers. Its success, under Giffard's editorship, along with the much greater success of 'The Times,' rendered insignificant the two other Tory papers, 'The Morning Herald' and 'The Morning Post.' The kindest thing that a Tory critic could say about 'The Post' in 1836 was that it was 'the pet of the petticoats, the darling of the boudoir, the oracle of the drawing-room, and the soft recorder of ball-

room beauties and drawing-room presentations.' 'The high favour in which "The Post" stands in the bowers of ladyhood,' it was added, 'is well deserved by that journal. In all matters interesting to the female world of fashion this paper has always the best information, which it employs in a discreet manner, imparting just as much of private affairs as the public ought to know, and no more.' According to the same informant, 'The Herald' was to be commended for 'the variety of its matter and the moderation of its tone,' being, with its Tory leanings, a more ardent supporter of Lord Palmerston's foreign policy than even 'The Chronicle,' hampered as it was by Whig traditions, could be.¹

More interesting than the commonplace history of these papers is the record of a new and unfortunate experiment in journalism which was made in 1836. Foreseeing the opportunities for fresh newspaper enterprise that would result from the reduction of the stamp duty, but not estimating the expenses necessary to such a venture, Dr. Black, a friend of Sir William Molesworth, and others, established the Metropolitan Newspaper Company, with a capital of 60,000*l.*, of which 42,000*l.* in all was called up, and, having bought or borrowed the connection of 'The Public Ledger,' merged it in 'The Constitutional,' which was started on September 15, the first day on which penny stamps were allowed to be used. Offering as much matter for fourpence halfpenny as had formerly been supplied for sevenpence, the new journal fairly claimed to be 'the firstfruit of the penny stamp, the eldest born of the reduction.' Its projectors professed no gratitude, however, for such facilities as were afforded them by the change in the law. 'We must frankly declare, although we may be censured for the admission,' it was said in the preliminary

¹ *Fraser's Magazine*, May 1836, p. 623.

article, 'that we do not feel any natural affection, the least filial reverence, for this our Whig parent. We thank him for our existence, and will serve him while we must; but our love and sympathy belong to another. Abolition is the spirit whom we serve.' The reduction of the newspaper stamp from fourpence to a penny was accepted, not as a boon, but as the imposition of a new tyranny after the old tyranny had become too intolerable to be longer maintained. 'Knowledge must, for the present, go on bearing the badge of Ignorance in the form of a penny, and Liberty, as let out by the Whigs, must be content to dance in fetters for a season. Hope must wear the livery of Fear, and the new order of things adopt, in a mitigated form, the symbol of the old.'¹

It will be seen from those statements and metaphors that the originators of 'The Constitutional' were uncompromising Radicals, or, as they said, 'reformers in the fullest meaning of the term.' "The Constitutional," they announced, among other things, 'will advocate the shortening of the duration of parliaments, an extension of the suffrage, and the vote by ballot. To the beneficial influence of these measures, were they now in operation, it is difficult to assign a limit. It would diffuse itself, as if by a magical movement, even over the House of Peers. Obstruction would see at once the impossibility of holding out. To secure quietly a reform of the Lords it is only necessary to administer a little more to the Commons.'²

These enthusiasts were too sanguine, both in their general speculations and in the conduct of their own heroic little enterprise. They made a brave commencement, however. They appointed as editor Samuel Laman Blanchard, a smart and versatile writer, who

¹ *Constitutional*, September 15, 1836.

² *Ibid.*

had had four years' experience in the management of 'The True Sun,' and Blanchard's great friend, Douglas Jerrold, was theatrical critic.¹ Thornton Hunt, Leigh Hunt's son, was sub-editor,² and great pains were taken to secure lively and accurate intelligence from abroad as well as from Ireland and various parts of England. 'The Constitutional' had its 'own correspondent' in Spain, whose letters were signed M. R. M., and it established a special express from France in opposition to the organisation already existing and jointly paid for by the five other morning papers, whose proprietors, for economical reasons, ignored their differences in this particular, but jealously excluded the interloper from their syndicate.³ The correspondent sent by 'The Constitutional' to Paris was William Makepeace Thackeray, now a young man of five-and-twenty, who here had his first important employment in journalism, though he had already been an occasional contributor to 'The Morning Chronicle' and other papers.⁴ Thackeray's letters, signed T. T.—of which there were generally three or four a week, and forty-four in all before the end of February, when, doubtless to save expense, he was brought home and made foreign editor—were written with remarkable vigour and keen apprehension of the political conditions of the time. For instance, writing on December 26, he said, 'You will complain that my letters have only this one theme of Louis Philippe; but recollect that the government in this country is the king. If it had not been for the

¹ *Poetical Works of Laman Blanchard* (introductory memoir by Blanchard Jerrold), p. 13.

² Knight Hunt, vol. ii. p. 188. ³ *Constitutional*, July 1, 1837.

⁴ A writer in the *Athenæum* (February 12, 1837) alleges—I do not know on what authority—that it was his venture in *The Constitutional* that 'impoverished the youthful Thackeray' and obliged him to follow journalism for a living. Thackeray's stepfather, Major Carmichael Smyth, was the chairman of the company.

king, you would have had Spain tranquil ; you would not have had M. Guizot or the laws of September ; and now, please God, there is a chance of ridding the country of both one and the other.' 'Without Louis Philippe,' he added, 'the revolution would have spread through the world. It is one of this man's boasts and titles to glory—he is proud of the cunning apostacy which has cheated the nation out of the ends proposed by it in placing him on the throne, which has so dammed and twisted the great current of public opinion as to leave that a shallow and muddy stream which was to have flowed, not through France merely, but through Europe.'¹

'The Constitutional' was as outspoken in its discussion of home as of foreign affairs. Though it scrupulously avoided all coarseness of language, and set an example in polite controversy which 'The Times' or 'The Chronicle' might have followed with advantage, it found as much fault with its Whig as with its Tory contemporaries. "'The Globe" is a Whig paper,' it said in one of its articles, 'which "The Constitutional" is not.'² It expressed its policy in ridicule as well as in argument, in rhyme as well as in prose. In a string of verses entitled 'The Two Criminals,' for example, it made fun of the indiscriminate way in which Daniel O'Connell and Joseph Hume were held responsible for all the blunders and misfortunes of the time :

While English laws exclude the many
From all the social rights of man,
While votes shall be withheld from any,
The blame must fall on Joe and Dan :
If Tory tricksters make Lord John ill,
It is the fault of that O'Connell :
If Whigs for ever fret and fume,
It is the fault of Joseph Hume.³

¹ *Constitutional*, January 2, 1837. ² *Ibid.*, November 5, 1836.

³ *Ibid.*, November 17, 1836.

But the promoters of 'The Constitutional' soon found that its impartial condemnation of both Whigs and Tories was not agreeable to any large body of readers, or that they had not money enough to keep it alive till it could force its way into public favour. At the close of 1836 they published a list of influential supporters who had promised to pay a twelvemonth's subscriptions in advance, and the list included the names of George Grote, Sir William Molesworth, Joseph Hume, Charles Buller, Roebuck, William Ewart, Perronet Thompson, Benjamin Hall, and Richard Potter. In February 1837 they increased the size of the paper, and raised its price from fourpence-halfpenny to the usual fivepence; but early in June they returned to the original size without altering the price. On June 22 they put the paper into mourning on the occasion of William IV.'s death, and they continued the mourning till July 1, when, in No. 249, they bade farewell to their readers. 'The mourning border which we recently put on,' it was then grimly said, 'was but the shadow of the coming event.' 'The Constitutional' disappeared, and 'The Public Ledger' was revived by its former proprietor, to be carried on on its old lines as a medium for shipping and other mercantile intelligence. Laman Blanchard then became editor of 'The Courier,' until, on its being converted into a Tory journal, he was employed by Fonblanque on 'The Examiner.'¹

Radicalism was not strong enough at this time to support a daily paper, especially in the face of such formidable competition as was offered by 'The Times,' in which a far ampler supply of news than any other paper could afford to collect and issue atoned, in the opinion of many readers, for whatever faults they might

¹ *Poetical Works of Laman Blanchard*, p. 15.

find in its political views ; and the Radicals had now a good choice of weekly papers on which could be spent as much money as most of them had to spare. 'The Examiner' and 'The Spectator' satisfied the more intelligent readers, and, among others adapted to less fastidious tastes, 'The Weekly Dispatch' took the lead.

For some time after its commencement in 1801, and styled 'Bell's Weekly Dispatch' until it passed out of its founder's hands, 'The Dispatch' had no very pronounced politics, and catered chiefly for the lovers of highly-spiced news, reports of prize-fights and such matters. But it was a Radical paper before it became the property of Alderman James Harmer, and under his control it was a vigorous advocate of reform. Harmer was a remarkable man. The son of a Spitalfields weaver, and an orphan at the age of ten, he worked his way so successfully that in 1833, before he was sixty, he was able to retire from a solicitor's business, which had for some time been yielding him about 4,000*l.* a year. When he died, in 1853, his estate was valued at more than 300,000*l.*¹ Most of that wealth had been derived from 'The Dispatch,' which he had managed with great skill from a commercial point of view, and in which the weekly article signed *Publicola*, written by various hands, and for some time by William Johnson Fox, was famous for its scathing denunciation of political, legal, and social abuses. Before the reduction of the stamp duty, which, with a short-sighted view to the interests of the proprietor, it stoutly opposed, 'The Dispatch' claimed to have a circulation of thirty thousand, at the high price of eightpence-halfpenny ; and when most of the papers reduced their price from sevenpence to fivepence, it continued to flourish as a sixpenny paper, selling, it was said, sixty

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1853, pp. 201, 202.

thousand copies a week in 1840. One among many tokens of its popularity was the imitation of its title, not only by Hetherington in his unstamped 'Twopenny Dispatch' in 1834, but also by the proprietors of 'The New Weekly Dispatch,' which was started in 1833. The latter ran for no more than seventy weeks, however, and the former was suppressed by the more rigid enforcement of the law after the lessening of the stamp duty in 1836. Alderman Harmer's paper continued to prosper, and prospered all the more in consequence of the frequent attacks that were made upon it and him.

Those attacks were especially violent in the autumn of 1840. Elected alderman of Farringdon Without in 1833, and having served as sheriff in 1834, Harmer expected to be made lord mayor in his turn at Michaelmas 1840; but the scandal, as they said it would be, was averted by his Tory opponents, who had a mighty champion in 'The Times.'

The crusade was begun on September 21, when 'The Times' published an elaborate protest against Harmer's election, signed by several liverymen of the city of London, who quoted against him a number of Radical utterances that had appeared in 'The Dispatch.' 'The paper,' they declared, 'can only be appropriately described as a public nuisance, and that of the most fearful character.' They complained that it assailed not merely Whig government and Tory government, 'but all government whatever, ridiculing alike all systems and all views, and plainly counselling anarchy and confusion'; that it had 'personally insulted the sovereign and her consort,' had 'broadly and repeatedly recommended the overthrow of the monarchy,' and had 'extolled and encouraged every instance of rebellion'; and, worst of all, that, not content with opposing the Established Church or encouraging dissent, it 'scoffed at all kinds

and forms of religion whatever,' and 'constantly and deliberately reviled the Christian faith and its professors of every class and denomination, and gave the preference to infidels and blasphemers of every description.'¹ These complaints 'The Times' endorsed in a furious article published on the same day as the liverymen's protest. 'The object is not merely to reject Alderman Harmer,' 'The Times' avowed. 'It is far higher and more important than this; it is to stamp with the blackest possible mark of public reprobation the principles of "The Dispatch" in the person of its chief and responsible proprietor.' The battle was fiercely fought. Nearly every day between September 22 and October 7 'The Times' published a column of argument and abuse, and when, as the result of the poll taken among the citizens, it was found that Harmer had obtained only 2,294 votes against 2,713 given for the alderman next in rotation, the prose song of triumph, issued on October 9, extended over more than two columns. 'The Times' took credit for having saved London from the appalling disgrace of having Harmer for lord mayor; but it had provided 'The Weekly Dispatch'

¹ Here are a few of the more obnoxious sentences quoted by these shocked liverymen:—'Protestantism, Catholicism, Methodism, or any other *ism*, is only a cant term to facilitate the impositions upon the mind, which impositions are always tricks to arrive at the breeches' pockets' (*Weekly Dispatch*, September 1, 1839).—'Socialism and Chartism are only the misdirected efforts to throw off the dreadfully intolerable curse of superstitious systems' (February 2, 1840).—'There is no more moral depravity in being an infidel than in being a clergyman. . . . Blasphemy is a word of no meaning whatever. It is a cunning coinage of priestcraft' (March 15, 1840). And, on the occasion of the government's proposal to make provision for Prince Albert, 'A young girl of eighteen governs about four-and-twenty millions of people at home, and about a hundred millions in the colonies and India. For this task the young lady takes 871,400*l.* per annum, and when she marries she pleads poverty, and calls upon her people, who are in a great state of distress, to support her husband by a further allowance out of the taxes' (February 2, 1840).

with a splendid advertisement, and had only damaged its own reputation among all who were not bigoted Tories.

Though in the main a consistent advocate of Tory views at this time, and giving them more powerful help than they obtained from the combined or rival assistance of all the other and avowedly Tory papers, 'The Times' continued to be independent when it chose. 'The question of absorbing interest is now,' Greville wrote, on January 24, 1839, 'the repeal or alteration of the corn laws, and the declaration of war against them on the part of "The Times" has produced a great effect, and is taken as conclusive evidence that they cannot be maintained, from the rare sagacity with which this journal watches the turn of public affairs. Besides that, its advocacy will be of the greatest use in advancing the cause which it already had perceived was likely to prevail. The rest of the Conservative press, "The Morning Herald," "Post," and "Standard," support the corn laws, and the latter has engaged in a single combat with "The Times," conducted with a kind of chivalrous courtesy, owing to the concurrence of their general politics, very unusual in newspaper warfare, and with great ability on both sides.'¹ The attitude taken up by 'The Times' on the question of corn-law reform was only one among many instances of its prescience and skill in shrewdly directing both ministers and the people in ways that, rightly or wrongly, it approved. In such clever journalism as Barnes achieved it was by no means easy to distinguish between leading and following, between the drivers and the driven.

A curious instance of the use that politicians had now come to make of the press occurred early in 1839.

¹ *Greville Memoirs* (Second Part), vol. i. p. 158.

Lord Durham had just handed in to the government his momentous report on the administration of Canada, chiefly prepared by Charles Buller, which was to revolutionise the whole colonial policy of the British empire; but it contained two paragraphs respecting church or crown lands to which the government objected, and which Durham consented to alter. These paragraphs had been inserted at the instigation of Gibbon Wakefield, who was determined that they should not be tampered with. He accordingly sent to Barnes a copy of the original report, before it or any new edition of it could be laid before parliament, and the whole lengthy document was printed in 'The Times' of February 10. Lord Durham's indignation thereat was great but futile. The original document had been published, and could not therefore be modified with decency. 'The Times' had, moreover, given another proof of its importance, and had forestalled the ministerial organ, 'The Morning Chronicle,' in its procuring of official information. Lord Durham, Greville tells us, had handed a copy of his report to Sir John Easthope, 'but with an injunction not to publish it; and Easthope told him he wished he had kept his copy to himself, for he could have obtained one elsewhere which he should have been at liberty to publish if he had not accepted his with the prohibition.'¹

The Melbourne administration, more impotent than ever during the two years after it obtained a new lease of feeble life in consequence of the queen's quarrel with Sir Robert Peel over the 'bedchamber question,' was further weakened by dissensions in the cabinet throughout 1840, which were chiefly due to Lord Palmerston's adoption, as secretary of state for foreign affairs, of a different course from that approved by most of his colleagues. The English bearings of the

¹ *Greville Memoirs* (Second Part), vol. i. p. 163, and note

policy of Louis Philippe's government and the Syrian question were the special grounds of dispute, in which the newspapers took sides. Peel and most of the Tories agreed with the orthodox Whigs in favouring Thiers, Guizot, and their party, and 'The Times' shared their views. 'The Morning Chronicle,' on the other hand, was a zealous supporter of Palmerston, and gave great offence to Lord Melbourne, Lord John Russell, and others by its plain speaking. Greville reports on October 1 that Lord John had written a letter to Guizot, then ambassador in London, in which 'he begged he would not consider that the articles which had lately appeared in "The Morning Chronicle" and "Observer" were approved of by the government, and repudiated any connection or concurrence with them; he had pronounced in the cabinet a violent philippic against the newspapers, which was entirely directed at Palmerston, who he knows very well writes constantly in them.' 'An article appeared in "The Times,"' Greville adds, 'strongly in favour of peace and harmony with France, and the acceptance of the Egyptian pasha's offers. Guizot, of course, was delighted with it.' And next day we read, "'The Morning Chronicle" puts forth an article having every appearance of being written by Palmerston himself (as I have no doubt it was), most violent, declamatory, and insulting to France. I made the Duke of Bedford go to Lord John and tell him this ought not to be endured, and that, if I were he, I would not sit for one hour in the cabinet with a man who could agree to take a certain line (with his colleagues) overnight, and publish a furious attack upon the same the next morning. Lord John said he had already written to Melbourne about it, that Palmerston had positively denied having anything to do with "The Morning Chronicle," and he did not see what more he

could do ; but he owned that all his confidence in him was gone.' ¹ This is amusing, yet instructive withal, and not solely as a scrap of newspaper history.

The writer of the troublesome articles was not Lord Palmerston, but Eyre Evans Crowe, who, for some time Paris correspondent of 'The Morning Chronicle,' had now come back to London to write leaders for it on foreign policy, and in opposition both to the temporising Whigs and to Peel's friends in the 'Times' office. The line taken up by 'The Chronicle,' however, was evidently sanctioned, if not dictated, by Palmerston,² who never forgave 'The Times' for opposing him. 'Melbourne told Clarendon,' Greville wrote in January 1841, 'that Palmerston was still very sore at the articles which had appeared in "The Times." Clarendon said he could not imagine what Palmerston had to complain of in "The Times," as, though there had been some articles attacking him, the far greater number had been in his favour. Melbourne said there had been a great deal the other way, and that Palmerston and his Tory friends with whom he had communicated had been constantly surprised to find that there was an influence stronger than their own in that quarter.' ³

Though it supported the Russellites, who in this respect were in some agreement with the Peelites, against the Palmerstonians, 'The Times,' all through the seven years of Lord Melbourne's premiership, and with variation from its usual practice, sided with the party out of office, and its Toryism was as consistent as

¹ *Greville Memoirs* (Second Part), vol. i. pp. 323, 324, 326.

² 'Sir John Easthope,' says Dr. Mackay (*Through the Long Day*, vol. i. p. 268) 'was particularly noted for his all but slavish worship of Lord Palmerston. His devotion to that chief was ultimately rewarded by a baronetcy.'

³ *Greville Memoirs* (Second Part), vol. i. p. 362.

Sterling and other writers under Barnes's editorship could make it. On other than party politics, however, and on all questions that were not directly concerned in the support of the Tory views at that time in the ascendant, Barnes allowed great freedom to his contributors, and, so long as they did work he liked, accepted and invited contributions from men of all parties. Though Moore was still the chief writer of the verse for which room was often found in 'The Times,' other poets or rhymers were admitted to its columns, Macaulay being of the number.¹

A more frequent contributor was Thackeray, who appears to have undertaken the reviewing of books under Barnes, for about a year at any rate, almost immediately after the failure of 'The Constitutional,' as well as some ten years later. 'I turned off far better things then than I do now,' he said when he had become famous, 'and I wanted money sadly ; but how little I got for my work ! It makes me laugh at what "The Times" pays me now when I think of the old days, and how much better I wrote for them then, and got a shilling where I now get ten.'² One of his earliest articles, and perhaps the first, appearing on August 3, 1837, was a long review of Carlyle's 'French Revolution.' Others were on 'The Duchess of Marlborough's Private Correspondence,' on 'A Diary Illustrative of the Times of George IV.,'³ on 'Memoirs

¹ Russell, *Memoirs &c. of Thomas Moore*, vol. vi. p. 213.

² J. T. Field's *Yesterdays with Authors*, p. 27.

³ This was the book that Thackeray, in *The Yellowplush Papers*, denounced in *Fraser's Magazine*. As Thackeray elsewhere spoke plainly but honestly about George IV. and his court, these sentences from the article in *The Times* are interesting : ' We never met with a book more pernicious or more mean. . . . It does worse than chronicle the small beer of a court ; the materials of this book are infinitely more base ; the loud tittle-tattle of the sweepers of the Princess of Wales's bedchamber or dressing-

of Holt, the Irish Rebel,' and, besides much else, on 'The Poetical Works of Dr. Southey, collected by himself,' the latter being published on April 17, 1838.¹ After that date no other contribution of Thackeray's during this period can be traced, except an article on Fielding, which he wrote in 1840. '"The Times" gave me five guineas,' he said in 1850. 'I recollect I thought it rather shabby pay.'²

Another of the large number of writers who helped to increase the interest and consequently the circulation of 'The Times,' was Benjamin Disraeli, who made his first known appearance among journalists as an indignant controversialist with 'The Globe,' which in 1835 had called attention to his change from Radicalism to Toryism. Disraeli defended himself in 'The Times,' and followed this with the Runnymede letters³ which, in feeble imitation of Junius, he wrote in the early months of 1836.

The 'Times' now furnished a constant succession of letters from outsiders, and miscellaneous articles, including a much greater amount and variety of foreign

room, her table or ante-room, the reminiscences of industrious eaves-dropping, the careful records of her unguarded moments, and the publication of her confidential correspondence, are the chief foundations for this choice work. . . . There is no need now to be loyal to your prince. Take his bounty while living, share his purse and his table, gain his confidence, learn his secrets, flatter him, cringe to him, vow to him an unbounded fidelity, and, when he is dead, *write a diary and betray him!*'

¹ *The Athenæum*, July 30, 1887.

² 'My wife was just sickening at that moment,' he said in the same letter, to Mrs. Brookfield. 'I wrote it at Margate, where I had taken her, and used to walk out three miles to a little bowling-green, and write there in an arbour—coming home and wondering what was the melancholy oppressing the poor little woman. How queer it is to be carried back all of a sudden to that time, and all that belonged to it, and read this article over! Doesn't the apology for Fielding read like an apology for somebody else too?'—*A Collection of Letters by W. M. Thackeray* (1887), p. 125.

³ T. P. O'Connor, *Benjamin Disraeli; a Biography*, pp. 214-254.

correspondence than any other paper could procure or find room for. The page was not quite so large as it afterwards became, but 'The Times' regularly appeared as a sheet of eight pages, whereas all the other journals, except on rare occasions, were still limited to four; and if the chief credit for the enterprise thus shown devolves on Walter, as the principal proprietor and business manager, it must be remembered that Barnes was responsible for filling what was for those days a journal of enormous size with readable matter. 'The Times' was vastly improved as a newspaper, in the sense of a collector and retailer of information, during the twenty-four years of Barnes's direction of it, and whatever might be thought of its political honesty or political wisdom, it had in his time, and largely through his influence, acquired such authority as an instructor and controller of public opinion, especially with the well-to-do portion of the community, which considered itself, and was in large measure, the 'governing class,' as no previous editor could have dreamt of. Barnes was the precursor of Delane.

He died in harness, and almost without warning, when he was only fifty-six, on May 7, 1841, four weeks before the defeat of the Melbourne administration which led to Sir Robert Peel's return to office. 'His death,' Greville wrote next day, 'is an incalculable loss to "The Times," in whose affairs his talents, good sense, and numerous connections gave him a preponderating influence. The vast power exercised by "The Times" renders this a most important event, and it will be curious to see in what hands the regulating and directing power will hereafter be placed. Latterly, it must be owned that its apparent caprices and inconsistency have deprived it of all right and title, and much of its power, to influence the opinions of others;

but that has been the consequence of the extraordinary variety of its connections, and the conflicting opinions which have been alternately, and sometimes almost if not quite simultaneously, permitted to discharge themselves in its columns.' ¹

¹ *Greville Memoirs* (Second Part), vol. ii. p. 2. Greville adds: 'Barnes was a man of considerable acquirements, a good scholar, and well versed in English, especially old dramatic literature.' At dinner Greville found him (vol. i. p. 123) 'an agreeable man enough, with evidently a vast deal of information, but his conversation bears no marks of that extraordinary vigour and pungency for which the articles in *The Times* are so distinguished.' In 1827 Sterling had told Moore that Barnes was 'the best good man with the worst-natured tongue'; he 'never heard him speak of anyone otherwise than depreciatingly, but the next moment after abusing a man he would go any lengths to serve him.'—Moore's *Diary*, vol. v. p. 171.

CHAPTER XVII.

WITH A PENNY STAMP.

1836—1850.

ON the lowering of the stamp duty from fourpence—or rather, as a discount of twenty per cent. had been allowed, from threepence and a fifth of a penny—to a penny, which took place on September 15, 1836, the price of most newspapers was reduced from sevenpence, till then the usual charge, to fivepence, but for several, especially the weekly papers, a reduction of only a penny was made, and in nearly all cases the proprietors gained more than the readers by the change. They were gainers also, and to a yet larger extent, by the lowering of the tax on advertisements from three shillings and sixpence to eighteenpence, which had come into force in 1833, as the reductions they were thus able to make in their charges, without risk or expense, led to a great deal more advertising and a corresponding increase of income. A large proportion of that income, it is true, was at once used by the more intelligent and enterprising proprietors in improving their establishments, extending their arrangements for procuring local, provincial, and foreign news, and in other ways meeting the growing demands of their readers for newspapers at least as much better in every way than those issued twenty or thirty years before as these earlier ones had been superior to the newspapers of the previous century. There was no lack of well-directed energy in this respect

on the part of 'The Times' and of the other journals which it had surpassed in wealth and influence, and which were now compelled, unless they were willing to be altogether outstripped, to compete with it more vigorously than ever; and the public benefited considerably. There was too much disposition among the successful newspaper managers, however, to profit inordinately by the fiscal reform, and to labour at upholding and extending their monopoly with a narrow-minded zeal which did not comport in all instances with their own interests or with those of the public. During the nineteen years of a compulsory penny stamp, pre-eminently successful managers like John Walter made more money than they could have hoped for under the old system, and newspaper properties on the whole were much increased in value; but there were many failures, and people who could ill afford to pay for their newspapers fivepence a day, or even sixpence a week, had some reason for complaining that they were not quite honestly catered for.

The complaints were freely uttered, and addressed especially to the government which had refused to make a clean sweep of the stamp duty, by the producers and the readers of such cheap papers as 'The Poor Man's Guardian,' in which Hetherington had bravely fought the battle for complete liberty of the press. 'The Poor Man's Guardian' had been succeeded by 'The Twopenny Dispatch' before the change of 1836, and this and other papers had flourished for a time; but the greater stringency with which the new law was enforced crippled and soon crushed them, and it was a very real hardship to the masses who had learnt to look for the twopenny papers, and who felt there was no good reason why they should not have penny papers, that they were deprived of their weekly reading except when they

contrived to get it by help of law-breaking. The anger thus provoked was shown in resentment of what were considered other acts of tyranny besides the imposition of the penny stamp, which, it was reckoned, generally cost nearly twopence in the case of papers with small circulation, seeing that they had to bear the expense of getting the paper stamped, and loss of the money laid out on all copies stamped but not sold. 'Reader,' said Feargus O'Connor, in the first number of 'The Northern Star,' which was issued from Leeds on November 18, 1837, 'behold that little red spot in the corner of my newspaper. That is the stamp; the Whig *beauty* spot; your *plague* spot. Look at it: I am entitled to it upon the performance of certain conditions. I was ready to comply, and yet, will you believe that the little spot you see has cost me nearly eighty pounds in money, together with much anxiety, and nearly one thousand miles of night and day travelling? Of this they shall hear more, but for the present suffice it to say there it is; it is my licence to teach.'

'The Northern Star,' soon transferred from Leeds to London, was during more than ten years the chief newspaper advocate of the Chartist movement, edited for some time by Julian Harney, and contributed to by Ernest Jones and other violent agitators, and it carried on in rowdy style a quarrel with the government, whether Whig or Tory, which would hardly have arisen or would have meant very little, if the authorities had not courted defiance. The 'teachings' of Feargus O'Connor and his associates and rivals may have been offensive and pernicious; but they were only dangerous, if they were really that, in so far as they received encouragement from the follies of mischievous rulers. Chartism, Socialism, and the other heresies that the comfortable and conventional classes resented and

desired to put down, were promoted, instead of being restrained, by the penny newspaper stamp and the wrath it stirred up.

The history of this rebellious journalism, fitful in its progress, of erratic politics, and of no literary merit, is interesting and instructive, but it does not call for detailed notice here : nor is more than passing reference necessary to the swarm of other serials issued after as well as before the appointment of the penny stamp, in forms designed either to evade the law or, without violating it, to achieve the objects aimed at. A taste for periodical reading had arisen and was growing rapidly, and while this was partly met by increase in the numbers and improvement in the quality of regular newspapers and dignified magazines, it also led to an ample supply of other publications, cheaper and coarser, and therefore more accessible and perhaps acceptable, to vast numbers of readers. Some, like 'The Poor Man's Friend,' a sequel to 'The Poor Man's Guardian,' and, like it, published by Hetherington, 'The London Dispatch' and 'The London Mercury' and 'The Moral Reformer' in which Joseph Livesey preached temperance, were penny weeklies with serious, if misguided, political intent, but not newspapers within the scope of the Stamp Act ; others also handled politics as well as social affairs with a pretence of humour, like 'The Penny Age,' 'The Star of Venus, or The Show-up Chronicle,' 'The Penny Satirist,' and two twopenny but not more respectable miscellanies of scandal, 'The Town' and 'The Fly' ; and others, still purporting to expose political and social abuses, were chiefly collections of fiction, like 'Cleave's Penny Gazette of Varieties.'¹ These, and such as these, competed

¹ A scathing article on some of these and other weeklies, entitled *Half-a-Crown'sworth of Cheap Knowledge*, which appeared anonymously in *Fraser's Magazine* for March 1838, has been identified as Thackeray's

with 'Chambers's Edinburgh Journal,' 'The Penny Magazine,' 'Leigh Hunt's London Journal,' a short-lived but admirable publication, and other magazines, as well as with the regular newspapers, and, untouched by either the old or the new Stamp Acts, were only indirectly encouraged by the change in the law ; but they were part of the development in periodical literature now in progress, and some, being reprehensible in themselves, were pioneers of much that was healthy.

The rise of comic journalism is noteworthy. Humorous verse and prose had been combined, on occasion, with the serious news or comments in most of the daily and weekly papers from the commencement of the nineteenth century, and in earlier days, as when Charles Lamb included poems and jokes in his 'fashionable intelligence' for 'The Morning Post,' and when Thomas Moore contributed his squibs in rhyme to 'The Morning Chronicle,' after the fashion set by Canning and his friends in 'The Anti-Jacobin,' and competing with Theodore Hook, Barham, and others in 'John Bull'; but independent comic journalism was somewhat of a novelty in 1831, when, on December 10, Gilbert Abbot a'Beckett and Henry Mayhew commenced 'Figaro in London.' As many as four other humorous

(*Athenæum*, March 19, 1887). A kindlier critic, Mr. Thomas Frost, says of *Cleave's Gazette* (in *Forty Years' Recollections*, p. 83): 'A roughly executed political caricature on the first page, and some vigorous writing on the rights and wrongs of the people, recommended the paper to the working men of the metropolis and the large towns of the manufacturing districts, and there was an ample provision of fiction and anecdote for the mental regalement of their wives and the rising generation. *The Penny Satirist* differed from Cleave's paper only in containing a larger quantity of political matter, and in reflecting, in that portion of its contents, the views of the Anti-Corn-Law League, rather than those of the National Charter Association. It was said, indeed, that it was subsidised by the League, the coarse woodcuts which embellished the front of the paper, and which were graphic arguments for the repeal of the imposts on food, being paid for by the funds of that body.'

papers were started within the next six months: 'Punch in London,' under Douglas Jerrold's editorship, on January 14, 1832; 'Punchinello; or, Sharps, Naturals, and Flats,' with illustrations by George Cruikshank, on January 20; 'The Devil in London,' afterwards called 'Asmodeus; or the Devil in London,' and finally 'Asmodeus in London,' on February 29, and 'The Schoolmaster at Home,' on June 9; and these were followed by 'Dibdin's Penny Trumpet' on October 20, and by the 'Whig Dresser' on January 5, 1833.¹ 'Figaro in London,' however, alone took the public fancy. Giving in four small quarto pages for a penny, as it announced, 'good-humoured squibs on passing events of primary popular interest,' along with witty 'brevities' and funny paragraphs, and with a column or two of theatrical criticism as its most solid item, it had at first only one caricature, repeated on the front page of every number, though before long other pictures—two or three each week—were introduced. The jokes were generally feeble, and sometimes very coarse; but they were amusing, and the publication lasted till August 10, 1839, Henry Mayhew being at that time the editor, and perhaps the only writer.

Its plan was revived, with great improvements, in 'Punch; or the London Charivari,' the first number of which appeared on July 17, 1841, under the editorship of Mark Lemon, with Henry Mayhew as his assistant, and Douglas Jerrold and other old venturers in comic journalism as contributors. Ebenezer Landells, William Newman, and Archibald Henning supplied the illustrations, and from the commencement there was an abundant supply of racy wit in the twelve pages, for which, no stamp being required, threepence was

¹ These six lasted severally only seventeen, ten, thirty-seven, six, four, and twelve weeks.

charged.¹ 'Punch' was an unprofitable speculation for some time; but it began to thrive when it became the property of Bradbury and Evans, under whom Mark Lemon continued to edit it, helped by a staff of brilliant contributors which soon included Gilbert a'Beckett, Thackeray, Stirling Coyne, Watts Phillips, William Henry Wills, Thomas Hood, and Horace and Augustus Mayhew, and with Leech and Tenniel among its illustrators. Its rise in popularity dates from December 16, 1843, when 'The Song of the Shirt' appeared in it and trebled its sale. This poem had been forwarded to Lemon with a letter from Hood, saying that it had been rejected by three editors, and asking that, if not now used, it might be thrown into the waste-paper basket, as the author was 'sick of the sight of it.' Some of Lemon's colleagues objected to its publication in 'Punch' on the ground that there was no fun in its humour, but Lemon liked it; and this clever editor, assisted by so many clever writers and artists, was soon able to draw a salary of 1,500*l.* a year, instead of the thirty shillings a week with which he started.²

Mark Lemon had a hand in the commencement of another and a yet more successful enterprise. Herbert

¹ Besides other illustrations, the first number had a large cartoon, 'Candidates under different Phases,' &c. &c.; one of its jokes, somewhat ponderous, but indicative of its political intent, was 'A Synopsis of Voting, arranged according to the Categories of *Cant*,' crowding a whole page. Its main divisions were as follows:—I. He that hath not a vote and voteth. II. He that hath a vote and voteth not. III. He that hath a vote and voteth,' the last being thus subdivided:—(A) intentionally; (1) corruptly, that is, either (a) bribed directly with money, place, or drink, or (b) bribed indirectly, or (c) intimidated, or (d) voluntarily corrupt; (2) conscientiously, in accordance either (a) with humbug—political, moral, or domestic, or (b) with principle—hereditary, conventional, or philosophical; (B) accidentally, through either (a) blunders of himself, or (b) blunders of others.

² *The True Story of Punch* was told at length, and for the most part accurately, by Mr. Joseph Hatton in eleven numbers of *London Society* in 1875.

Ingram, at first a compositor, was a newsagent in Nottingham, where his experience of the great increase in sale consequent on the appearance, now and then, of rough wood-cuts in 'The Morning Chronicle' and other journals, inclined him to believe that a regularly illustrated newspaper would prosper. He is said to have been nearly twelve years cogitating the project and endeavouring to raise the necessary capital, and in the meanwhile the popularity acquired by several humbler undertakings, both the early comic papers and such cheap publications as the 'Police Gazettes' that were plentiful, favoured his view. At length, on May 14, 1842, in conjunction with Nathaniel Cooke, who had married his sister, and William Little, whose sister he had married, and with Lemon as his chief adviser, he produced the first number of 'The Illustrated London News,' which gave, in sixteen three-column folio pages, along with the usual news, about twelve small pictures, besides humorous sketches and drawings of costumes. The illustrations, far in advance of anything that had yet been attempted, though for the most part very poor work in comparison with subsequent achievements, were the special attractions of Ingram's venture; but it aimed at much else. 'We shall be less deeply political than earnestly domestic,' it was announced in the second number. 'Our business will not be with the strife of party, but with what attacks or ensures the home life of the empire; with the household gods of the English people, and, above all, of the English poor; with the comforts, the enjoyments, the affections, and the liberties, that form the link of that beautiful chain which should be fashioned at one end of the cottage, at the other of the palace, and be electric with the happiness that is carried into both.' 'Three essential elements of discussion with us,' it was added, 'will be

the poor laws, the factory laws, and the working of the mining system in those districts of our soil which nature has cavered with her treasures, and cruelty disfigures with its crime.'

Under its first editor, known, because of his wealth in baptismal names, as 'Alphabet' Bailey, 'The Illustrated London News' was somewhat pompously and clumsily written. Among its contributors, however, were Mark Lemon, Stirling Coyne, and Henry, Horace, and Augustus Mayhew, who combined social teaching with grotesqueness of phrase, while Howard Staunton soon made it an authority on chess, and the antiquarian and topographical concerns proper to a pictorial paper were zealously looked after by John Timbs, its sub-editor. It had, moreover, a competent staff of artists, who made a name for themselves as well as for the journal by their good work, in John Gilbert, William Hervey, Kenny Meadows, Birket Foster, 'Alfred Crowquill,' John Leech, and others.¹

The opposition that Ingram met with in one direction had memorable results. Prominent among the followers of Hetherington and other producers of cheap literature, before and after the reduction of the stamp duty, was Edward Lloyd, born in 1815, who was a bookseller, and a publisher as well, and even an author, before he was twenty years old. 'Lloyd's Stenography, or an easy and compendious System of Shorthand,' a sixpenny pamphlet, appeared in 1833, and it was followed by a succession of tales, issued in penny numbers, some of them being imitations of 'Pickwick,' 'Oliver Twist,' and other popular novels.² Tales were

¹ Mason Jackson, *The Pictorial Press; its Origin and Progress*, pp. 284-296.

² On the first appearance of Lloyd's *Pickwick*, Dickens threatened to obtain an injunction restraining its publication. He soon admitted, however, that it was a good advertisement of his own work.

also given, along with scraps of information, notices of books and plays, and miscellaneous gossip, in 'The Penny Sunday Times,' a large four-page sheet, adorned with rough illustrations of exciting occurrences, which Lloyd issued, and this publication, which was as much like a newspaper as it ventured to be without coming under the Stamp Act, was so successful that in 1842 two other weeklies, 'Lloyd's Penny Atlas' and 'Lloyd's Penny Weekly Miscellany of Romance and General Interest,' which did not attempt to be newspapers, were started from the same establishment.¹ More important was 'Lloyd's Illustrated London Newspaper,' also commenced in 1842, with the object of competing with 'The Illustrated London News'—for which sixpence was charged—by a much cheaper publication, providing a certain amount of news, but in such a form as, it was hoped, would render a penny stamp unnecessary.

The first number of 'Lloyd's Illustrated,' giving eight folio pages, with three columns in a page, and a few small woodcuts, and sold for twopence, appeared on November 27; and the publication was continued for seven weeks. Then, however, the authorities interfered, and Lloyd was informed that he must either suppress his paper, or issue it as a stamped newspaper, the special item of important information which he was condemned for publishing without a stamp being a report of the escape of a lion from its cage. The result of this arbi-

¹ 'The "march of intellect," as it was called,' says Mr. Thomas Frost (*Forty Years' Recollections*, p. 85), who did much of this work in his youth, 'had not then advanced far enough to suggest the possibility, since realised, of its being a remunerative undertaking to engage authors of high literary repute to write for penny publications; but, as in all cases, the existence of a demand creates a supply, authors were soon found who were very willing to write any number of novels and romances for the *honorarium* offered by Mr. Lloyd, that is, ten shillings per weekly instalment of the story.' *The London Journal*, very different from *Leigh Hunt's London Journal* of 1834, was commenced soon after this date.

trary proceeding was a prompt reshaping of the journal. 'Lloyd's Weekly London Newspaper,' called No. 8, but the first of the fresh series, appeared on January 15, 1843, as an eight-page paper, with five columns on the page, but without illustrations, for which twopence-halfpenny was charged. On September 24 the price was raised to threepence, but, at the same time, the size was increased from eight to twelve pages. 'Lloyd's' was now a cheaper paper than before, and much cheaper than any stamped newspaper that had preceded it.

A rival soon entered the field. The first number of 'The News of the World,' giving in eight larger pages about as much matter as 'Lloyd's' contained, and also sold for threepence, was published on October 1, 1843. 'Journalism for the rich man and journalism for the poor,' it was said, not quite accurately or grammatically, in the opening article of this new paper, 'have up to this time been as broadly and distinctly marked as the manners, the dress, and the habitations of the rich are from the customs, the squalor, and the dens of the poor. The paper for the wealthy classes is high-priced ; it is paid for by them, and it helps to lull them in the security of their prejudices. The paper for the poorer classes is, on the other hand, low-priced, and it is paid for by them ; it feels bound to pander to their passions. Truth, when it offends a prejudice and shows the evil of passion, is frequently excluded from both. The first is often as remarkable for its talent, for its early intelligence, as the other, we regret to say, is for the absence of talent and the staleness of its news.' Promising to emulate all the virtues and to avoid all the vices of other papers, 'The News of the World' hardly kept its word. Its Radicalism was more violent than that of 'Lloyd's,' and it was more freely supplied with offensive news ; but it pleased many readers, and in the course

of twelve years it attained a circulation of nearly 110,000, being some two or three thousand ahead of 'Lloyd's.'

More dignified, in its earlier stage, than either of those threepenny papers was another, 'The Weekly Times,' which was started on January 24, 1847, and the temper of which was fairly expressed in an article in the first number, temperately criticising the queen's speech with which parliament had just been opened, and contrasting it with the recent American presidential address. 'Last year,' it was said, 'Queen Victoria intimated briefly the freedom of trade in corn, and this year the queen indicates a commencement of free trade in land. For ourselves, we must confess that in these announcements we see a superiority, both in matter and in manner, to the message of President Polk, in which he ponderously bullies Mexico, harangues on theories of government like a professor, quibbles like a lawyer about repudiation, and flatters his constituents as if he were on the hustings. Of course the superstition of royalty is gone by. Loyal spirits of old deemed the monarch the representative of the Divinity. Nowadays kings and presidents are more justly regarded as the representatives of the nation and the people. If this notion of them be more true, it is also, therefore, more august. To our ancestors the notion of Jove, instead of sitting on Olympus and deciding the fate of nations with a nod, becoming a lecturer on mythological philosophy was not more preposterous than the spectacle of a king delivering a farrago, on the theory of government, of dialectical subtleties and rhetorical declamations.' Somewhat smaller than 'Lloyd's,' 'The Weekly Times' mixed with its epitome of news a larger proportion of original writing, claiming in its title to be 'a London newspaper of history, politics, literature, science, and art'; and, with the common pseudonym of Littlejohn, a

succession of able writers supplied a weekly article of less extreme Radicalism than the Publicola article in 'The Weekly Dispatch.'

'Reynolds's Weekly Newspaper,' then sold for fourpence, and of ruder politics than any of the threepenny Sunday journals that preceded it, was commenced on May 5, 1850, and five years later it had a circulation of nearly 50,000, that of 'The Weekly Times' being at the same date about 75,000, while the circulation of 'The Weekly Dispatch' was only 38,000. In 1843, when 'Lloyd's,' then the only cheap Sunday newspaper and but three months old, issued 32,000 copies a week, at twopence halfpenny, 'The Weekly Dispatch' sold upwards of 61,000 at sixpence. Of 'The Illustrated London News,' on the other hand, which in 1855 reached a circulation of nearly 110,000, the circulation in 1843, when it was only a year old, was 25,000. Among the other leading weekly papers sold at sixpence, the average sale of 'The Sunday Times'—which had been started in the autumn of 1822 by Daniel Whittle Harvey as a more Radical journal than 'The Dispatch' had by that time come to be, but which, in other hands, was, like 'Bell's Life,' more of a sporting than a political paper—was 20,000 in 1843; that of 'Bell's Weekly Messenger,' a steady-going Tory organ, paying special regard to the interests of farmers, was 16,000; that of 'The Weekly Chronicle,' an enterprising journal which had but short life, was less than 16,000; and 'The Examiner' had only a weekly sale of 6,000, though this was nearly four times as great as the weekly sale of 'The Spectator.'

Those figures help to show how great was the change coincident with, and partly consequent upon, the cheapening of newspapers by the reduction of the stamp. 'The Examiner,' which had never had a circulation at all proportionate to its great influence, was still read by

middle-class Radicals and others on account of Fonblanque's brilliant and pungent writing, but it had lost credit through its too loyal support of the Whig policy of Lord Melbourne and his successors, who were at variance among themselves; and 'The Spectator,' always more pedagogic, and only professing to address itself to a select audience, was now much occupied in riding unpopular hobbies, of which the advocacy of Gibbon Wakefield's colonisation schemes, deplorably illustrated in the Canterbury settlement in New Zealand, was perhaps the principal. Neither of these papers satisfied the great body of Radicals, for whom stronger fare was offered by the sixpenny 'Weekly Dispatch' and the three-penny 'Lloyd's,' while readers who cared most for amusement were well satisfied with 'The Illustrated,' in which, besides pictures and light essays, special attention was paid to many social abuses. 'The Dispatch,' to the assistance of which William Johnson Fox had by this time brought his vigorous pen, writing as Publicola, was, however, until the cheaper papers had outstripped it, the great and acknowledged exponent of social abuses and champion of political reforms among Radicals who, insisting upon sweeping changes and agreeing in some respects with the extreme party, declined to call themselves Chartists.

The Chartist movement, never so strong as it was supposed to be, had violent support from many of the unstamped publications of the day, and was taken at its worth in the more intelligent of the regular weekly journals; but by many others it was almost ignored, and such mention as was made of it by the daily papers was generally in the way of excessive denunciation prompted by quite unnecessary alarm. On all the grievances that gave unhealthy life to Chartism, the defects of poor law administration, the miseries of

factory life, the capitalist tyranny against which trades unionism revolted, the despotism of the Established Church, the perversion of the inadequate Reform Act of 1832, and much else, and above all on the widespread and steadily increasing disasters consequent on the corn laws, the Radical weeklies commented boldly and persistently, and none with more energy or better effect on public opinion than 'The Weekly Dispatch.'

One important branch of journalism was almost begun in these years. There had been newspapers especially interested in religious questions long before 'The World' was started in 1826 as the organ of the congregational dissenters, and the work undertaken by 'The World' was less temperately carried on for some time by 'The Patriot'; while 'The Record,' established in 1828, was a formidable exponent of the views of the 'evangelical' section of the Church of England. Among other papers of this class, representing diverse views, moreover, 'The Watchman,' started in 1835 as the representative of the Wesleyan body, held a respectable place. Soon after the reduction of the newspaper stamp to a penny, however, and as one of the popular movements that accompanied it, a new era began in religious periodical literature, which was now and henceforth much more polemic in its style and purport.

The first number of 'The Tablet' was published on May 16, 1840, under the editorship of Frederick Lucas, a talented and amiable young barrister who had left the Society of Friends to become a devout and broad-minded Roman Catholic. Lucas's 'brief confession of political faith,' uttered in that first number, was an interesting document, illustrative of more than his own fine temper of heart and mind, and of more than the position then taken up by the most enlightened portion of the body to which he had attached himself, and which he

served as a lay apostle. 'Legislative reforms and enactments in any higher sphere than that of police,' he declared, 'are very necessary to remove obstructions, and very powerless to effect much positive good.' 'His comparatively low estimate of the good that can flow from them,' he promised, 'will not dispose him to be seized with vehement, indiscriminating, and unfounded admiration of the measures of his political friends, nor vehement, indiscriminating, and unfounded hostility to those of political opponents.' 'We believe,' he added, 'there is very little difference between Lord John Russell and Sir Robert Peel in the desire to maintain the present, or very nearly the present, mixture of aristocracy and democracy ; the present mode of exercising the prerogative of the crown, the present mode of administering and amending the laws ; and, in short, the present distribution of political, legislative, and administrative power. Both of them are desirous to maintain the Anglican establishment in a certain degree of pre-eminence over the Catholic Church and the sects which the establishment has brought forth. On many points we should agree with both ; but we should give our support to the party to whose exertions the triumph of the principles of toleration and justice is owing, rather than to the party on whose acceptance they have been forced.'

Therefore Lucas preferred the party of Lord John Russell to the party of Sir Robert Peel. Many members of the latter party, he said, could not be considered sane. 'Their opinions are a strange medley of truth and falsehood, of sense and nonsense, of maxims borrowed with little judgment from other times and other systems than their own, and therefore harmonising neither with those times nor with their own systems. Fanatical without religion, unbending in their

purposes but unscrupulous in their means, and capable of waiving their principles for a time in order to secure their ultimate more sure triumph ; ruthless, meddling, rash, heedless, and impatient ; they have in England made hateful the designation of ultra-Tory, and in Ireland have consigned to eternal infamy the name of Orangeman.' 'On the subject of Ireland,' he went on to say, 'it is difficult to speak with moderation. We are no repealers ; but we look upon the cry for repeal to be the most natural for the inhabitants of a country which has been governed with such fatal disregard of all the plainest rules of justice and prudence.' 'Absenteeism and the strengthening of the hands of the Orangemen of the north by aid of their brother bigots in England, he averred, had brought about a grievous state of things, which afforded much excuse for the repeal cry ; 'but we think that no impartial person who considers the change which late years have introduced into the character of our Irish legislation, the immense stride that has been made from the more than Orange barbarities—if that be conceivable—of the last century, to the mild and moderate injustice of the present day, can hesitate in believing that the troubled waters will work themselves pure, that patience (Heaven knows the Irish have been patient hitherto), moderation, and firmness will suffice for the accomplishment of what remains, without giving up the country to the horrors of civil war—the inevitable result of any serious attempt to obtain the repeal of the Union.'

In that spirit, speaking gently when he thought gentleness was honest, and speaking fiercely when he thought fierceness was right, and aided by a number of English and Irish Catholics of dispositions like his own, Lucas instructed his fellow-religionists and offered battle to his foes. He had to educate the Catholicism

of his day, and to fight, not merely for removal of the small persecutions it was exposed to in England, but for redress of the grievous social and political wrongs endured by its followers in Ireland. He did both with a strange blending of meekness and firmness, of grace and fiery zeal; and he achieved much, and with none the less effect because some of his associates objected so strongly to his tactics that, leaving them to carry on 'The Tablet,' he started 'The True Tablet' on February 26, 1842, and continued the rivalry till the opposition collapsed, and 'The Tablet,' reverting to him, was brought out in an enlarged form on January 1, 1843.¹

In curious contrast to 'The Tablet,' yet resembling it in some respects, was 'The Nonconformist,' commenced on April 14, 1841, with Edward Miall for editor, as an indignant protest both against the hardships to which dissenters were exposed as regards the payment of church rates and other impositions, and against the cowardice of many of the victims themselves. 'Dissenters as a body,' Miall wrote in his first number, 'have uniformly acted as though they were ashamed of their great leading principle, and secretly distrustful of its efficacy; and they have wasted their efforts in a series of petty skirmishes, which have served only to win for them more comfortable quarters, without bringing them a whit nearer to the attainment of their ultimate object. Before dissenters can hope to make way, they must make the basis of their operations national rather than sectarian, must aim not so much to right themselves as to right Christianity.' 'The primary object of "The Nonconformist,"' he explained, 'is to show that a national establishment of religion is vicious in its constitution, philosophically, politically, and religiously; to bring under public notice the

¹ Edward Lucas, *Life of Frederick Lucas*, vol. i. pp. 74-80.

innumerable evils of which it is the parent ; to arouse men, and more especially those who, avowedly and on religious grounds, repudiate it, from the fatal apathy with which they regard its continuance and extension ; to ply them with every motive which ought to prevail upon them to come forward and combine and act for an equitable and peaceful severance of church and state. This is the great design of the projectors of this paper. They have no other object, pecuniary or party, to serve.' 'As regards general politics,' he added, 'we ask nothing more from the state than *protection*, extending to the life and liberty, the peace and prosperity of the governed ; and to secure this to all classes of subjects we advocate a fair and full representation to all.'

But that demand involved much. Objecting as strongly as did Lucas to Tory domination, Miall had no liking for the Whig administration that was breaking up when 'The Nonconformist' appeared. 'Will our ministers and representatives,' he exclaimed, 'never see till too late that a silent people is not necessarily a consenting people or an indifferent people, that often when most quiet they only bide their time ? An increasing expenditure and a declining revenue, hunger for bread among the masses, Ireland on the verge of rebellion, and foreign affairs in derangement, popular discontent, commercial embarrassment, intestine party divisions, anti-poor-law pledges that were never meant to be redeemed, furious Protestantism that cannot be soothed into subordination, a frowning court, a discontented people ! The question is no longer one of party. With more than half our population it is one of life or death.'

'The Nonconformist' can hardly be ranked among religious papers. It gave more space than its contemporaries to matters specially interesting to members of

the dissenting body to which Miall belonged ; but it was always and pre-eminently a political journal, making its chief business the discussion of ecclesiastical questions, of faults in the State Church machinery, and of hardships endured by those who held aloof from it, and dealing freely with all other concerns of the hour, domestic and foreign, from its editor's Radical standpoint ; and it did good service in its own way. To it, and to Miall's work upon it during nearly forty years, the nonconformists and the public at large owe much.

A year after 'The Nonconformist,' on July 9, 1842, 'The Inquirer' was started as the organ of the Unitarian body, and in January 1843 'The English Churchman' undertook to support the cause of the High Church party, in opposition to the 'evangelicalism' of 'The Record.' 'The Guardian,' a much more enterprising and comprehensive newspaper for Church of England readers, and with William Ewart Gladstone as one of its founders, was not commenced till 1846.

Other papers whose appearance must be noted as part of the great extension of journalism in these years were 'The Era,' which was commenced in 1838 as a champion of publicans' interests, but which soon devoted itself more particularly to theatrical matters ; 'The Britannia,' a Conservative paper, which, however, had Thackeray for one of its contributors, dating from 1839 ; 'The Builder,' dating from 1842 ; 'The Farmer,' dating from 1843 ; and 'The Economist,' in which, also in 1843, James Wilson began to propound safe views on financial questions and their social and political bearings. The services rendered by 'The Economist' in its earlier years in calling for a repeal of the corn laws, and in advocating free trade in general, secured for it an influence of which good use was made in opposing the railway mania that soon followed.

The effects of railway enterprise upon newspaper history are remarkable, the accumulation of journals devoted to its real or spurious interests during the craze that reached its height in 1846 being but a passing phase. 'Herapath's Railway Journal,' at first only a monthly magazine, was started in 1835, when railways were in their infancy, and 'The Railway Times' followed in 1837. For some while these two sufficed as channels of information to investors and others concerned in the progress of the new method of travelling which was inaugurated in 1825. But when public apathy and alarm were succeeded by excessive enthusiasm and reckless speculation, more than two dozen railway journals contrived to reap a short harvest by the change.

In 1845 there were two short-lived daily papers, 'The Iron Times,' which was published every morning, and 'The Railway Director,' published every afternoon; one paper, 'The Steam Times,' appearing on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays; seven which were issued twice a week, and nineteen others which were issued once a week. Of these only 'The Railway Record,' commenced in 1844, and the two of older date survived the crash of 1846; but till then most of them, and nearly all the other papers as well, profited greatly, not only by the general demand for news, but yet more by the profusion of advertisements incident to the mania. The parliamentary rule requiring that announcements of all new schemes for which the sanction of the House of Commons was to be asked during the forthcoming session should be made before December 1, produced such a rush of advertisements for 'The London Gazette,' that during November 1845 it was found necessary to publish a monstrous edition of that official sheet every day, and on one memorable day, the

15th of the month, its printed matter extended to 583 pages.¹

The reckless speculation in railways thus curiously illustrated was soon brought to a check, but legitimate railway enterprise continued and increased, to the immense advantage of the community, and of journalism, as one of the concomitants of its progress. The much greater rapidity and certainty with which news could be conveyed to the various printing presses in London and the provinces, and also with which newspapers could be sent to distant places, enabled proprietors and all the writers and others employed by them to render to the public far more efficient service than had before been possible ; and these improvements were as profitable to the producers as to those for whom they catered. Newspapers had their full share in the general commercial and industrial advance for which the middle third of the nineteenth century was in every way remarkable, and to which the partial adoption of free trade principles, especially signalled by the abolition of the corn duties, and the mechanical developments attendant on the establishment of railways, alike conduced. By the growth of trade and manufactures, and the vastly increased prosperity of provincial towns and local centres, benefiting nearly all classes of society, though in unequal proportions, new facilities and new fields for journalistic work were obtained.

The provincial papers, even in such busy centres as Manchester, Liverpool, and Birmingham, were still only published once a week, but they were now much larger, much better supplied with both local and general information, and much better written, than formerly. Nearly all the abler and more enterprising country journalists became local reporters and correspondents for the London

¹ Andrews, vol. ii. pp. 267-269.

papers, and this arrangement, rendered much easier by the railway system, worked well for all parties. Of meetings and important occurrences in remote districts prompt intelligence was forwarded by train to London at far less expense than in the days when men like Dickens had to be sent down to describe them, posting to and fro on horseback or in carriages ; and the country agents who in this way earned money and gained experience used their knowledge and position in improving the provincial journals with which they were connected. In the smaller towns uncultured printers or booksellers often continued to do all the editing and writing deemed necessary for the clumsy and sparsely circulated news-sheets issued by them. Even among these, however, a healthy spirit of competition began to show itself, and the worthy rivalry among the more important and influential country papers rapidly and steadily enhanced the influence and importance of all. From the earliest times clever journalists, schooled in the provinces, had occasionally migrated to London, there to acquire more dignity and authority than had been possible to them at home, and there had been a similar migration of unlucky or eccentric journalists from London to the country towns ; but these movements became much more numerous under the change brought about by the reduction of the stamp duty in 1836, and as part of the revolution that was then inaugurated.

An early incident of that revolution was the formal establishment in May 1837 of the Provincial Newspaper Society, projected a year before, with John Matthew Gutch, of 'Felix Farley's Bristol Journal,' Edward Baines, of 'The Leeds Mercury,' and John Blackwell, of 'The Newcastle Courant,' among its founders. 'The objects of this society,' it was announced, 'are to promote the general interests of the

provincial press, and to maintain the respectability of a body which may, without vanity, be said to occupy a very important place in the community. It disclaims all political or exclusive views, the best proof of which is to be found in the names of its members and the widely differing age, standing, and political character of their several publications. It disclaims, also, all desire of dictating to the proprietors of the provincial journals in any matter relating to the management of their respective concerns, but is founded on the belief that the interchange of information or opinions on subjects of general interest may be useful to the proprietors at large.¹ The society did varied and always useful work in protecting and promoting the interests and advancing the welfare of country journalism, and in agitating for the removal of all remaining fiscal restraints on the liberty of the press, and for further reform in the libel laws and other hindrances to newspaper progress ; and it has been of immense service to the journalism of London as well as of the provinces. When it started there were only about two hundred country newspapers, with an aggregate circulation of barely more than 400,000 a week. Twenty years later both the number and the circulation were at least thrice as great, though even then hardly any attempt had been made to publish a daily paper out of London.

The railways and other improved means of communication were at first especially beneficial to the London daily papers, as they were thus enabled to obtain information much more cheaply and expeditiously, and

¹ Whorlow, *The Provincial Newspaper Society, 1836-1886 ; a Jubilee Retrospect*, p. 29. Much interesting information about the progress of country journalism, which is of necessity barely touched upon in this work, is given in Mr. Whorlow's memoir. See also *Then and Now, or Fifty Years of Newspaper Work*, by Mr. William Hunt, and Mr. Thomas Frost's *Reminiscences of a Country Journalist*.

with much more variety and accuracy, than in former times. The old and very costly system of special expresses was gradually superseded as easier lines of conveyance were opened up, and, in anticipation of similar advantages in obtaining news from abroad, and of the yet greater advantages to result from the introduction of the electric telegraph, the enterprise hitherto mainly limited to England and the countries nearest to it was employed further afield.

Memorable illustration of this occurred in 1845. Soon after the establishment of peace between France and England in 1815, the leading London papers began to have regular correspondents in the foreign centres of information, and especially in Paris, from whom they received by each day's post, such particular news as could be obtained and was likely to interest their readers in addition to any extracts made from the continental journals ; and as the arrangements of the General Post Office, before Rowland Hill's day, were far from trustworthy, an independent service of couriers on both sides of the channel, and of swift cutters to cross it, was organised by John Walter of 'The Times,' by means of which important news often reached Printing House Square some hours before it was known even in Downing Street. Walter's enterprise, so increasing the popularity of 'The Times' that the heavy expense was more than met by the augmented circulation, was before long emulated by the other newspaper proprietors, and first by Edward Baldwin of 'The Morning Herald,' who established a rival service of expresses which was continued for a long while after 'The Times,' to avoid further competition and lessen the outlay, had admitted 'The Morning Chronicle' and 'The Morning Post' to participation in the elaborate machinery of news-conveyance it had constructed. Thus matters continued and

progressed after 1827, when Lieutenant Waghorn's opening of the overland route to India rendered possible and necessary an extension of the machinery in order to procure prompt intelligence from the far east. During many years the courier of 'The Times,' and of the other papers that to this extent it recognised as allies, awaited the arrival of each mail-boat from Suez at Marseilles, and as soon as he had received his parcel of letters and papers, hurried across France to send it on without delay from Paris to London. 'The Times,' however, made itself obnoxious to Louis Philippe's government by some of its strictures on French policy in 1845, and the result was a series of petty persecutions and meddlings eminently characteristic of Guizot's notion of statesmanship. 'The Times' courier was detained in Paris on account of the alleged informality of his passport and other pretexts, and thus his despatches were prevented from reaching London until after the more regular mail bags had been delivered. Walter accordingly made fresh arrangements.

When the Indian packet vessel called at Suez on October 19, it was met by a messenger who claimed the consignment to 'The Times' office, rode with it on a swift dromedary to Alexandria, where Waghorn, not loth to join in this extension of his smart policy, was waiting in an Austrian steamer to convey the parcel to a port near Trieste. Thence it was carried with all speed and by the shortest route to Ostend, and from Ostend by special steamer to Dover, and by special train to London. It reached 'The Times' office early enough for the principal portion of its contents to be printed in 'The Times' of October 31, and sent off to Paris, where the news was read, to the amazement and chagrin of Guizot and his colleagues, before the rest of the Indian mail had passed through the city. In the hope

of defeating 'The Times,' the French government placed special trains and steamers at the disposal of 'The Morning Herald' for conveyance of its November parcel from India, and it was so far successful that on this occasion the 'Herald' was two days ahead of 'The Times' in the publication of the next batch of eastern news. Walter was not to be baffled, however, and the Austrian government came to his help in what was now a most exciting international contest. He was also favoured by a succession of violent storms in the Mediterranean which hindered the Marseilles boat while the Trieste boat was quietly steaming up the Adriatic, and 'The Times' forestalled 'The Morning Herald' by nearly a fortnight with its December budget. The struggle was maintained for some time longer, and not abandoned until, the Marseilles route being found to be cheaper and, as a rule, safer and quicker than the Trieste route, and the French government having seen the folly of meddling with the arrangements of a man like Walter, all obstacles were removed and the old plan was reverted to with such improvements as this brisk struggle had suggested.¹

That episode gives striking evidence of the vigour with which newspaper enterprise was now carried on. It had fresh development by help of other mechanical and scientific contrivances, among them being the introduction of the electric telegraph, of which early, if not the earliest, newspaper use was made by 'The Morning Chronicle' in May 1845, when it received a message from Portsmouth along the wires then recently laid by the London and South-Western Railway Company.² In November 1847 the queen's speech at the opening of parliament was for the first time

¹ Knight Hunt, vol. ii. pp. 205-208 ; Andrews, vol. ii. pp. 261-263.

² William Hunt, *Then and Now*, p. 110.

telegraphed to various parts of the country ; and advantage was promptly taken of the first cable laid between France and England, in August 1850. For a long time, however, this wonderful agency for obtaining and circulating news was too costly and too partial in its range to be generally employed.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE RISE OF 'THE DAILY NEWS.'

1844—1854.

CHARLES DICKENS, who had done much work for 'The Morning Chronicle' as a descriptive reporter during the later years of John Black's editorship, had begun to find sufficient and more agreeable occupation as a successful novelist before Black was superseded by Andrew Doyle. In March 1844, however, he contributed to 'The Chronicle' a few sketchy articles which caused some stir, and for which the new editor rather grudgingly paid the ten guineas apiece that he asked, and, as he was then planning a visit to Italy, he offered to send thence, as he said, 'a letter a week under any signature I chose, with such scraps of descriptions and impressions as suggested themselves to my mind.' To Dickens's great annoyance, this offer was declined on the score of expense, and the result was a conference between him, his friend and literary adviser, John Forster, and his publishers, Bradbury and Evans, at which the idea of starting a new journal in opposition to 'The Chronicle' was first broached. The project, in abeyance while he was abroad and for some time afterwards, was revived in the autumn of 1845, and, contrary to the advice of Forster, who knew better than Dickens his friend's unfitness for the plodding duties of a newspaper editor, it took shape in 'The Daily News.'¹

¹ Forster, *Life of Charles Dickens*, vol. ii. pp. 81, 82, 189, 191.

The first number appeared on Wednesday, January 21, 1846, that date being fixed upon in order that the start might immediately precede the opening of the parliamentary session in which it was expected that Sir Robert Peel would announce the proposed abolition of the corn laws. 'The principles advocated by "The Daily News,"' Dickens wrote in the introductory article, 'will be principles of progress and improvement, of education, civil and religious liberty, and equal legislation—principles such as its conductors believe the advancing spirit of the time requires, the condition of the country demands, and justice, reason, and experience legitimately sanction. Very much is to be done, and must be done, towards the bodily comfort, mental elevation, and general contentment of the English people. But their social improvement is so inseparable from the well-doing of arts and commerce, the growth of public works, the free investment of capital in all those numerous helps to civilisation and improvement to which the ingenuity of the age gives birth, that we hold it to be impossible rationally to consider the true interests of the people as a class question, or to separate them from the interests of the merchant and manufacturer. Therefore it will be no part of our function to widen any breach that may unhappily subsist or may arise between employer and employed; but it will rather be our effort to show their true relations, their mutual dependence, and their mutual power of adding to the sum of general happiness and prosperity. That this great end can never be advanced without the carrying of a calm and moderate tone into the discussion of all questions bearing upon it is sufficiently apparent. In such a tone we shall hope to treat them.'

Those sentences—pledging 'The Daily News' to more advanced Liberalism than had hitherto appeared

in any daily paper, except now and then in 'The Morning Chronicle' and in the shortlived but valiant 'Constitutional,' which Dickens seems, consciously or unconsciously, to have taken as his model in some respects, and honestly claiming to hold neutral ground between wealthy arrogance and plebeian discontent, both of which had spokesmen enough in the press—were dignified and explicit, as also were the others that called special attention to 'one feature in the course we have marked out for ourselves.' 'We seek as far as in us lies,' said Dickens, 'to elevate the character of the public press in England. We believe it would attain a much higher position, and that those who wield its powers would be infinitely more respected as a class, and an important one, if it were purged of a disposition to sordid attacks upon itself, which only prevails in England and America. We discern nothing in the editorial plural that justifies a gentleman or body of gentlemen in discarding a gentleman's forbearance and responsibility, and venting ungenerous spleen against a rival by a perversion of a great power—a power, however, which is only great so long as it is good and honest. The stamp on newspapers is not like the stamp on universal medicine bottles, which licenses anything, however false and monstrous; and we are sure this misuse of it, in any notorious case, not only offends and repels right-minded men in that particular instance, but naturally, though unjustly, involves the whole press as a pursuit or profession in the feeling so awakened, and places the characters of all who are associated with it at a great disadvantage. Entering on this adventure of a new daily journal in a spirit of honourable competition and hope of public usefulness, we seek in our new station at once to preserve our own self-respect and to be respected, for ourselves and for it, by our readers.'

Among the chief proprietors of 'The Daily News' at its commencement were Bradbury and Evans, Sir William Jackson, Sir Joshua Walmsley, and Sir Joseph Paxton, the capital raised or promised being 100,000*l.* Dickens's salary as editor was fixed at 2,000*l.*, and there was corresponding liberality in the scale of payments to be made to the large staff of leader writers, literary and musical critics, reporters, and others that were engaged, several of them being induced by friendship for Dickens or by offers of higher salaries to transfer their services from 'The Morning Chronicle.' Forster, who was now writing much for 'The Examiner' under Fonblanque, was one of the principal leader writers, and Eyre Evans Crowe, long connected with 'The Chronicle,' was another. William Henry Wills and Frederick Knight Hunt were sub-editors. William Weir had charge of the department for collecting information and offering comments on the railway enterprises that were then unhealthily active. There was a foreign assistant editor who looked after the correspondence from Paris and other places abroad. Dickens's father was responsible for the parliamentary reporting, Laman Blanchard, Blanchard Jerrold, Joseph Archer Crowe, and more than a dozen others being subordinate to him. All the arrangements for carrying on the paper were made with a lavish outlay of money, almost the only economy attempted being in a halving of the cost of foreign expenses by entering into partnership for this purpose with Edward Baldwin, who had purchased 'The Morning Herald' some two years before, his son, Charles Baldwin, being already proprietor of 'The Standard.' The new owner of 'The Herald' had done much to improve it, especially as regards the collection of foreign news and advocacy of Lord Palmerston's views on continental affairs, and in the hope of crushing

him, the managers of 'The Times' had excluded him from participation in the service of special messengers which the proprietors of 'The Chronicle' and 'The Post' were allowed to share with them in order to forestall the General Post Office in the bringing of letters from abroad. The expenses of such a service were not less than 10,000*l.* a year, and Edward Baldwin was as glad as were the proprietors of 'The Daily News,' that this heavy outlay should be divided between them.

The first number of 'The Daily News' was for those days a remarkable exploit in journalism. Dickens's opening article was followed by three others, all dealing with the supremely important question of corn law reform in various aspects ; and more than a page was occupied with a full report of a meeting on the subject held on the previous evening at Ipswich and of a great speech there delivered by Richard Cobden. Nearly the whole of another page was devoted to a long review of railway affairs and to reports of proceedings connected therewith in various parts of the country. Two columns were filled with a gossiping and critical article on the music of the day, written by Dickens's father-in-law, George Hogarth, who had charge of this portion of the paper. A spirited poem, 'The Wants of the People,' appeared as the first of a series of twelve 'Voices from the Crowd' which Charles Mackay had been commissioned to write. And, for the satisfaction of Dickens's many admirers, the number contained the first of a series of 'Travelling Letters, written on the Road,' describing some of his experiences when abroad in 1844, which were afterwards reprinted as 'Pictures from Italy.'

The next few numbers were hardly less attractive. The same writers and others crowded with varied and

interesting matter all the columns not required for news of the day. The war against protection was waged with unparalleled vigour, the seventh number being accompanied by a four-page supplement giving 'some account of the corn laws and their operations, designed to elucidate the approaching debates,' and the tenth containing a long letter from Cobden 'to the tenant farmers of England.' Among other letters of rare interest was one in which Walter Savage Landor denounced the system of slavery in the United States, and, besides continuing his 'Travelling Letters,' Dickens commenced another series, 'Letters on Social Questions'; the first, on 'Crime and Education,' being published on the thirteenth day.

But Dickens only edited seventeen numbers of 'The Daily News.' On February 9 he wrote to Forster, saying that, 'tired to death and quite worn out,'¹ he had thrown up the work; and, apparently without compunction, he left the paper to fare as best it could without him, except that he consented to the publication at intervals during the next three months both of his letters on Italian travel and of a few others on English social questions. Thereupon Forster, not very cheerfully, but in order to relieve his friend from the irksome and unsuitable responsibility he had taken on himself, became acting editor, and he retained the office till nearly the end of the year. 'God knows there has been small comfort for either of us in "The Daily News" nine months,' Dickens wrote to him on October 28. 'Make a vow (as I have done) never to go down that court with the newsshop at the corner any more, and let us swear by Jack Straw as in the ancient times. I am beginning to get over my sorrow for your nights up aloft in Whitefriars, and to feel nothing but

¹ Forster, *Life of Charles Dickens*, vol. ii. p. 92.

happiness in the contemplation of your enfranchisement.'¹

Dickens was through life as erratic and arbitrary as any man of greater genius could be, not more generous and self-sacrificing when the humour took him than he was reckless of his obligations to others and of his own best interests when his whim was perverse. Those who thoughtlessly acted on his suggestion that an expensive newspaper should be started for him to edit, and who entrusted him with duties that he was quite unfit to perform, however, must share the blame for the fiasco that nearly caused 'The Daily News' to be wrecked before it was three weeks old. It is clear, moreover, though nothing to this effect has been recorded, that from the first there were serious differences between Dickens and his editorial staff and at least some of the proprietors. All probably were at one regarding the free-trade policy that had especially to be insisted upon when the paper was started, and there could be no doubt in the minds of any as to the propriety of following Cobden's lead in this matter. But many free-traders were at variance with Cobden on other problems that had to be dealt with from time to time in the columns of a newspaper, and England's foreign and colonial complications, and conflicting proposals for coping with them, caused wide divergence in the ranks even of the more advanced Liberals. There would have been ample room for quarrelling had 'The Daily News' been at its commencement a prosperous undertaking. As it was then far from prosperous, constant friction was inevitable, and, Dickens not being a man who would consent to any economies he disapproved of, we may assume that this, as well as the restless disposition that made steady attendance to the

¹ Forster, *Life of Charles Dickens*, vol. ii. pp. 275, 276.

routine of a newspaper office uncongenial to him, led to his sudden abandonment of the task he had undertaken.

'The Daily News' was saved from ruin by the appointment of Charles Wentworth Dilke as its manager when it had been in existence three months. Dilke had had experience in retrieving the fortunes of an unlucky paper. In 1830 he became part proprietor and editor of 'The Athenæum,' started two years before by James Silk Buckingham, and he lost no time in adopting on that paper a bold policy which, after patient effort, made it not only an influential literary organ, but also a valuable property. In 1831 he lowered its price from eightpence to fourpence. 'Mercy on us!' wrote John Hamilton Reynolds, who then had a small interest in it, 'after the cost of writers, printers, duty, and paper, what in the name of the practical part of a farthing remains to report upon as profit?' The reduction in price, however, had such satisfactory results that in 1835 Dilke added eight pages to the sixteen to which 'The Athenæum' had previously been limited. 'So you enlarge "The Athenæum,"' Allan Cunningham then wrote. 'You already give too much for the money.' This change also proved satisfactory. In 1840, by which time Dilke had come to be sole owner, the paper was reported to be 'a success, but not yet a financial success if past losses were added to the wrong side of the account; it was paying well, but had not repaid the money which had been sunk on it at first.' The balance was soon adjusted, and in April 1846 Dilke, assigning the editorship of 'The Athenæum' to other hands, undertook to carry out a like policy with 'The Daily News,' to which he engaged himself for a term of three years.¹

¹ Dilke, *Papers of a Critic*, vol. i. pp. 25, 33, 47, 61.

His first year's experiences were trying. All the efforts made to produce a paper as well supplied as 'The Times' with news and readable matter of all sorts having failed to secure for it a circulation of 4,000, while that of 'The Times' was then at least 25,000, Dilke adopted the same tactics—in this instance far more venturesome—which he had pursued with 'The Athenæum.' On June 1 the price of 'The Daily News' was lowered from fivepence to twopence-halfpenny, which, as a penny stamp had to be used in either case, was equal to a reduction of nearly two-thirds. Four pages instead of eight were generally given, except when the pressure of news or advertisements justified a doubling of the size; but though the circulation was quickly raised to 22,000, this by no means covered the expenses, and fresh troubles arose.

No attempt had hitherto been made to issue a morning paper at so low a price, and the jealousy with which 'The Daily News' had from the first been regarded by its contemporaries now developed into violent opposition, and a league among the rivals for its overthrow. 'The Times' took the lead with frequent and outrageous abuse, for which a pretext was found in the Radicalism of the newcomer; and underhand tricks appear to have been freely resorted to. The worst injury done to 'The Daily News,' of which it openly and angrily complained, appeared in a patching up of the old feud between 'The Times' and 'The Herald' as regards the procuring of foreign news. 'The Herald,' till now excluded from the system of continental expresses which Walter had organised, and in which he had allowed 'The Chronicle' and 'The Post' to participate, was invited to share in that arrangement, and thus to obtain its news from abroad at a cost of much less than half of the 10,000*l.* a year

which it had agreed to divide with 'The Daily News.' The whole outlay of 10,000*l.* a year under this head was accordingly—and as the victim declared, by dishonourable breach of the contract between them—thrown on 'The Daily News,'¹ and in order to meet the additional expense of 5,000*l.* a year, the price of the paper was raised to threepence on October 29.

The warfare between the young journal and its older rivals was carried on more hotly than ever, personal animosities being expressed in political controversy, and 'The Daily News' was only enabled to keep alive by the persevering shrewdness of its zealous manager and the intervention of fresh capitalists who, being all members of what was sneered at as the Manchester school, wished it to be even more Radical, and therefore more unpopular with many, than it had been at starting. It was at length deemed expedient to revert to the original size and price, and on February 1, 1849, 'The Daily News' appeared once more as a fivepenny paper of eight pages, the plea for the change being that less than eight pages were insufficient for adequately resisting, from day to day, the combined Toryism of 'The Times,' 'The Chronicle,' 'The Herald,' and 'The Post'; but there was probably not much financial advantage from the change. Besides the original capital of 100,000*l.*, another 100,000*l.*, it is said, was sunk in the paper during the first ten years of its struggling life. Dilke, who had had many disputes with his employers during the term of his three years' engagement, retired from the management in April 1849.²

¹ *Daily News*, October 28, 1846.

² As Knight Hunt was sub-editor of *The Daily News* at the time, we may assume that his account of 'the staff and newspaper expenses of a daily paper in 1850' (*Fourth Estate*, vol. ii. pp. 196–204), was a statement of the cost of producing that journal. It included the weekly salaries of a chief editor 18*l.* 18*s.*, a sub-editor 12*l.* 12*s.*, a second sub-editor

Forster had been succeeded in the editorship in the autumn of 1846 by Eyre Evans Crowe, whose general fitness for the post condoned or excused in the eyes of the proprietors his Palmerstonian leanings on foreign policy, with which most of them were not in accord. On all domestic questions, however, Crowe was at one with the Manchester Radicals, and about most of the foreign questions that came to the front in these years the differences between them were not great. The conduct of the ministers of Louis Philippe towards the close of his inglorious reign deprived them of all English sympathy, and, whatever the Whigs might think, Radicals of every shade could not but agree with Palmerston and the Tories in condemning such diplomatic muddling as showed itself in the Spanish marriages complications and in French interference with the Italian aspirations after liberty. After the ill-managed revolution of 1848, moreover, and while the injudicious republicans in France were preparing for the second empire, Crowe could have little reason for expressing in 'The Daily News' opinions that were not endorsed by Cobden and his friends. He was free to give a generous support to the Hungarian as well as to the Italian movements towards self-government, and to condemn the absolutism of Austria and Russia no less than the more contemptible tyranny of the Bour-

10*l.* 10*s.*, a foreign sub-editor 8*l.* 8*s.*, and an estimate of 4*l.* 4*s.* a day for leader-writers ; also a Paris correspondent at 10*l.* 10*s.* a week, and agents in Boulogne, Madrid, Rome, Naples or Turin, Vienna, Berlin, and Lisbon, varying from 1*l.* 1*s.* to 5*l.* 5*s.*, and receiving 24*l.* 3*s.* in all. The salaries of sixteen parliamentary reporters amounted to 86*l.* 7*s.* a week, and the cost of law reports to about half as much, while 9*l.* 9*s.* was spent on a money article and city news. The chief printer's salary was 5*l.* or 6*l.*, and he had about sixty compositors and others under him. There were about twenty machinists and boys. The publisher's salary was 5*l.* 5*s.* a week, and the total cost of production averaged 520*l.* ; the editorial expenses being 220*l.*, the cost of foreign and local correspondence 100*l.*, and the outlay in printing, machining, publishing, &c., 200*l.*

bons, provided his protests against these foreign scandals did not involve suggestions of English intervention. When in 1852 the differences between him and the proprietors grew wider he resigned the editorship, which was next held creditably by Knight Hunt during the two years before his death.

Though 'The Daily News' had troubled life during its early years, it profited by the defection of 'The Morning Chronicle' from Liberalism. After Black's dismissal, in 1843, and yet more after the establishment of 'The Daily News,' when Dickens drew away from it several of its best writers, 'The Chronicle' fared ill. Having supported Lord Palmerston, in opposition to his colleagues, while he was foreign secretary in the Melbourne administration, it continued to support his views in opposition to the policy of Lord Aberdeen, who was foreign secretary under Sir Robert Peel from 1841 to 1846, and it was still Palmerston's champion in the press when he resumed the foreign secretaryship in Lord John Russell's ministry. This consistency was not discreditable to the proprietor, Sir John Easthope, but it gave offence to others, both in high and in low quarters. In high quarters Lord John and those of his colleagues who were not Palmerstonian preferred, as was only prudent, the friendship of 'The Times,' now proffered to them, to that of 'The Chronicle.' 'They have concluded an alliance with the leviathan of the press,' Greville wrote in July 1846, 'which gives them a temperate, judicious, but very useful support. "The Morning Chronicle" is furious at seeing the position of "The Times," *vis-à-vis* of the government, and the editor went to John Russell to remonstrate, but he got no satisfaction. He merely replied that he did not wish to have any *government* paper, but could not repudiate the support of "The Times." He remembers

that "The Morning Chronicle" was the paper of Palmerston, devoted exclusively to him, and not that of the government.'¹

The tactics of Easthope and his new editor were not made more friendly to Lord John Russell by the premier's contempt. They held to their plan of zealously supporting Lord Palmerston and condemning all who opposed him, and they certainly had warrant for this in the line taken at that time by rival politicians as regards the Spanish marriages. 'I sat next to Palmerston at the sheriffs' dinner,' wrote Greville in February 1847, 'and told him a great deal about Paris, and especially the mischief "The Morning Chronicle" had done there. He said, "I dare say they attribute the articles to me." I told him, since he asked me, that they did, and that it was difficult to convince them that they did not emanate from him. He affected to know nothing about them, but I told him it really would be well to find means to put a stop to them. Meanwhile, the attacks on Aberdeen have drawn down on Palmerston two vigorous articles in "The Times," which may teach him that he has everything to lose and nothing to gain by such a contest, the very inferior articles in "The Chronicle" not being read by a fifth part of those who read the far better ones in "The Times."'²

A year after that 'The Morning Chronicle' was effectually purged of Palmerstonianism by a change of proprietorship. On July 26, 1847, Sir John Easthope, who had been carrying on the paper at a loss for some time, incurred further loss by reducing the price from fivepence to fourpence, and as soon as opportunity offered for relieving himself of his burden he took advantage of it. Reverting to its former price, and

¹ *Greville Memoirs* (Second Part), vol. ii. p. 406.

² *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 52.

altering its politics, 'The Chronicle' made a fresh start on February 21, 1848.

Its new proprietors were the Duke of Newcastle, the Earl of Lincoln, Sidney Herbert, and other influential Peelites who were willing to spend money during seven years in pushing the interests of their party; and its new editor was John Douglas Cook, who had for some time been one of the reporters of 'The Times,' and who gathered round him a brilliant staff of contributors, including George Sydney Smythe, afterwards Lord Strangford, Gilbert Venables, Abraham Hayward, William Vernon Harcourt, and Thackeray.¹ Its business manager was William Delane, the father of the clever young editor of 'The Times,' the long-standing feud between the two papers being to some extent weakened by their approximation to the same views in politics, as well as by their agreement in efforts to stamp out 'The Daily News.' One novelty in the plan of 'The Chronicle' during these years of brief revival was the issue of several editions during the day, furnishing items of late information so soon as they arrived, and thus offering a clumsy substitute for the evening papers, whose ranks had been augmented since September 1, 1846, by the appearance of 'The Express,' an afternoon supplement to 'The Daily News.'

Differing widely from 'The Daily News' in politics, 'The Chronicle' vied with it in the department of journalism which Dickens, even in his short term of newspaper editorship, had done much to encourage. The public interest in abuses of the law and the need of amending faults that had been allowed to grow

¹ *Correspondence of Abraham Hayward*, edited by H. E. Carlisle, vol. i. p. 125; Mackay, *Forty Years' Recollections*, vol. ii. p. 150; *A Collection of Letters of W. M. Thackeray*, p. 29. 'As if I had not enough to do,' Thackeray wrote in October 1848, 'I have begun to blaze away in *The Chronicle* again. It's an awful bribe—that five guineas an article.'

up in our social institutions rendered it necessary for these subjects to be written about in the newspapers, and suggested various inquiries and reports by which they could please if not instruct their readers. The sort of work that Fonblanque had long been doing in 'The Examiner' was now done more grotesquely in 'Punch' and more picturesquely in weeklies like 'The Illustrated London News,' and when Dickens showed how effective could be a column or two on the value of ragged schools, on the abominations of hanging, and so forth, others followed suit. The appalling outbreak of cholera in 1848 led to investigations in which all the daily papers took part, but no others so largely as 'The Morning Chronicle'; and an unparalleled exploit in journalism of this sort was begun in the same paper on October 18, when it published the first of a long series of articles on 'Labour and the Poor,' designed 'to give a full and detailed description of the moral, intellectual, material, and physical condition of the industrial poor throughout England,' and, as it announced, carefully prepared by 'a chosen body of practical writers and thinkers, admirably qualified by prior knowledge and habits of observation for their task.'¹

The first of these articles furnished in more than three columns the opening portion of an account of industrial life and pauperism in Manchester, and it was followed by many others dealing in the same way with the various manufacturing towns, most of these being written by Angus Bethune Reach, with help from Charles Mackay and others.² The intention was to publish one such lengthy and weighty article every day, two each week treating of the manufacturing

¹ *Morning Chronicle*, October 18, 1849.

² Mackay, *Forty Years' Recollections*, vol. ii. p. 153.

towns, two others, most of which were written by Alexander Mackay, treating of the rural districts, and the remaining two, compiled by Henry Mayhew, to whose initiation the whole plan was due, being devoted to the aspects of low life in London. The order was often disturbed by the pressure of parliamentary and other matter for which room had to be found; but the articles were continued, with intermissions, through several months, and the largest and most attractive group furnished the substance of Mayhew's famous work on 'London Labour and the London Poor.' For this work the author rightly claimed that it was 'the first attempt to publish the history of a people from the lips of the people themselves, giving a literal description of their labour, their earnings, their trials, and their sufferings, in their own "unvarnished" language, and to portray the conditions of their homes and their families by personal observation of the places and direct communion with the individuals.'¹

Seeking to increase its circulation and influence by such worthy projects as that, 'The Morning Chronicle,' under Douglas Cook, was a zealous upholder of Peelite doctrine in its political articles, and those articles were all the more interesting because they were chiefly written by men who, if not quite amateurs in newspaper work, could hardly be called professional journalists. One of the most energetic and persevering was Abraham Hayward, who from the commencement of the new rule, wrote two or three leaders every week. Hayward was at home at clubs and fashionable dinner-parties, and all through life an approved intermediary between politicians and editors. He was also a ready writer. Being in the gallery of the House of Lords on May 8, 1849, when the newly-made Earl of Derby, 'the Rupert

¹ Preface to *London Labour and the London Poor*.

of debate,' almost procured by his brilliant oratory the defeat of the bill to repeal the navigation laws, Hayward scribbled on a few sheets of note paper a smart reply to the protectionist arguments used during the sitting, and, as soon as the debate was over, hurried to the printing office with his article ready for publication next morning. This article, causing some astonishment when it appeared, and rousing jealous feelings in the breasts of other newspaper writers, is said to have set the fashion of issuing editorial comments on parliamentary proceedings side by side with the reports of those proceedings, instead of allowing a day to elapse.¹

'The Morning Chronicle' was a serviceable, if a costly, engine for the leading of the Peelites from the Conservatism from which they started to the Liberalism in which most of them found rest; and the migration and its guidance, skilfully carried on during the five and a half years of Lord John Russell's first administration, were nearly concluded during Lord Derby's nine months' tenure of office in 1852. 'The Times,' always more or less friendly to Lord Aberdeen, was preferred by him to the more devoted 'Chronicle,' as a newspaper organ, when he became premier in December 1852; and it said all that could be said for him and his colleagues to any useful purpose so long as it was possible for anything to be said with the smallest effect, but this abandonment of 'The Chronicle' for 'The Times' was a cruel blow to the patient apostles of the men now in power. On September 14, 1853, after complaining that Lord John Russell, who preceded Lord Clarendon as foreign secretary under Lord Aberdeen, seemed to have a personal dislike for him, Hayward wrote to Sir John Young, the chief secretary for Ireland, 'I must tell you another "Chronicle" grievance which the editor wishes

¹ Pebody, *English Journalism, and the Men who have made it*, p. 118.

me to mention. Copies of public documents and the last despatch of Lord Clarendon, published two days since, for example, are uniformly kept back from him and given to "The Times." This is both unfair and impolitic. "The Chronicle" is the only morning paper that has uniformly supported the government, and "The Times" constantly turns against it on the chance of gaining any stray ray of popularity.' Young sympathised with the conductors of 'The Chronicle,' and, on his behalf, Lord Elcho wrote somewhat cynically on September 28: 'I am sorry that Cook is hurt at not having received the Clarendon July despatch at the same time as "The Times." He certainly is entitled to be treated upon an equality, if not to have a preference given to him, in all matters of government information, for he has certainly been a staunch friend to the Peelites, and to the coalition, whilst our friend "The Times" is a staunch friend only to "The Times."'¹

But 'The Chronicle' was losing ground and being deserted by all its supporters, divisions arising even among the Peelites of the inner circle that tried to keep it alive. 'What has come over Harcourt?' Hayward wrote on December 19 to the Duke of Newcastle, whose special mouthpiece he was in 'The Chronicle.' 'His language about the government seems borrowed from "The Herald" or "The Standard." Cook, too, is getting too bellicose. I had a long talk with him yesterday, and I have written to him again to-day. The articles in this day's paper, however, appear to me to be in the right tone. He is a good fellow, and open to reason, but rather apt to be swayed by men like Harcourt, who, though a clever fellow, is rather too fond of strong language and uncompromising steps.'²

¹ *Correspondence of Abraham Hayward*, vol. i. pp. 189, 191.

² *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 220.

All Hayward's efforts to keep Cook in the right path or to restore political strength to their paper, however, were unavailing. 'The Chronicle' lingered on as a would-be Peelite organ through 1854, and on May 30 in that year, writing to Sir John Young, Hayward said, 'There is not a word of truth in a prevalent report that "The Chronicle" has been sold.'¹ But the crash came in the autumn. By a curious arrangement, the paper with all its plant was then sold to Serjeant Glover for 7,500*l.*, on the understanding that, if he continued to support in it the Peelite policy, he should have the money back with interest, being paid 3,000*l.* a year for three years.²

That contract soon fell through, as Glover preferred to draw a subsidy from Louis Napoleon, and to make other experiments; but while it lasted Hayward clung to the sinking ship. 'Things seem settling at last,' he wrote to Sir George Cornewall Lewis on February 8, 1855, 'and I am glad of it, for I have written the first article of "The Morning Chronicle" for more than a fortnight (being often obliged to re-write more than once in a day), and I am dead beat. This paper is getting very like the Crimean army. One day, about a month ago, the new proprietor, Serjeant Glover, came to me and said he had broken with all his staff, and that, unless he was helped he should break down at once, or put the paper into other hands. I thought it best to save it for the party, and so resumed writing for a period—a period very critical for my friends, and during the three weeks preceding their fall I was their only defender.' "The Chronicle" was sold to Glover some months since,' Hayward said in a letter to Bulwer Lytton on March 29, 1855. 'I write an article for it

¹ *Correspondence of Abraham Hayward*, vol. i. p. 221.

² James Grant, *Newspaper Press*, vol. ii. p. 311.

now and then ; but that is the extent of my connection, and the Peelite party have nothing to do with it.'¹

At the close of 1854 the circulation of 'The Morning Chronicle' averaged only about 2,500, while that of 'The Morning Post' was about 3,000, that of 'The Morning Herald' about 3,500, that of 'The Daily News' about 5,300, that of 'The Morning Advertiser' about 6,600, and that of 'The Times' about 55,000. The circulation of 'The Times' was thus nearly thrice that of the five other papers put together, and 'The Advertiser,' bought of necessity by every member of the Licensed Victuallers' Society, was next in rank ; but in the course of nine years 'The Daily News' had taken precedence of the remaining three.

This youngest of the daily papers had been making slow but steady progress under Crowe's editorship and Dilke's management. The return in 1849 to the usual price of 5*d.* had lowered the circulation ; but it left a much larger balance of income from each copy sold, with which to defray the heavy expenses inevitable to a newspaper that undertook to collect accurate information from places far and near. No pains were spared with this object, and along with an ample supply of news, there was plenty of the original writing on divers matters of interest about which the readers now expected to be instructed or amused. For some time Dr. Dionysius Lardner was the Paris correspondent, and among the numerous writers of occasional articles was William Hepworth Dixon, who contributed a series on 'The Literature of the Lower Orders' and, in 1849, another on 'London Prisons,' which led to the preparation of his first volume, 'John Howard.' When Frederick Knight Hunt became editor early in 1852 he brought to the work indefatigable energy and large experience

¹ *Correspondence of Abraham Hayward*, vol. i. pp. 245, 252.

of the exact requirements of the paper and of its public. Hunt had been trained as a doctor but found journalism more to his liking, and had worked zealously on 'The Daily News' from its commencement, his original colleague in the sub-editorship, William Henry Wills, having retired in 1859 to assist Dickens in the production of 'Household Words.' Among Hunt's contributors was Harriet Martineau, one of the few women who have found congenial employment in regular newspaper writing.

'In April 1852,' wrote Miss Martineau, 'I received a letter from a literary friend in London, asking me, by desire of the editor of "The Daily News," whether I would send him a leader occasionally. I did not know who this editor was, had hardly seen a number of the paper, and had not the remotest idea whether I could write leaders.' At the age of fifty, however, she made the experiment, and with great success. 'I sent him two or three,' she reports, 'the second of which, I think it was, made such a noise that I found there would be no little amusement in my new work, if I found I could do it. It was attributed to almost every possible writer but the real one. This hit set me forward cheerily, and I immediately promised to do a leader a week.' From sending one she soon began to send two, and before long the average rose to five or six every week.¹ Her first important contributions were thirty-seven letters, written between August 10 and October 10, 1852, while she was making personal inquiry into the political and social condition of the Irish people, which were afterwards republished as 'Letters from Ireland.'

The relations between this contributor at Ambleside and her London editor were pleasant. 'We were precisely agreed,' she said, 'as to the principle of the war,

¹ *Harriet Martineau's Autobiography*, vol. ii. pp. 405, 406, 412.

as to the character of the Aberdeen ministry, as to the fallaciousness and mischievousness of the negotiations for the Austrian alliance, and as to the vicious absurdity of Prussia, and the mode and degree in which Louis Napoleon was to be regarded as the representative of the French nation. For some time past the historical and geographical articles had been my charge, together with the descriptive and speculative ones in relation to foreign personages and states. At home, the agricultural and educational articles were usually consigned to me, and I had the fullest liberty about the treatment of special topics arising anywhere. With party contests and the treatment of "hot and hot" news, I never had any concern, being several hundred miles out of the way of the latest intelligence.'¹ The work continued long after Knight Hunt's untimely death, at the age of forty, in 1854, when he was succeeded by his old colleague, William Weir.

Illustration of the way in which work of another sort was done for 'The Daily News' in times when railways were young and but few telegraphic lines had been opened, is furnished by William Hunt, who was then editor of 'The Western Courier' at Plymouth, as well as one of the local correspondents of the London paper, his instruction being 'to keep pace with "The Times."'. Plymouth was at that time a place of special importance for collecting news, as the steamers bringing reports of the Kaffir war and the gold discoveries in Australia arrived there. 'In order to secure early information of the approach of a mail steamer,' we are told, 'the newspaper correspondents employed men to

¹ *Harriet Martineau's Autobiography*, vol. ii. p. 405. Among Miss Martineau's later contributions, during a connection of more than twenty years, were the contents of two volumes, *Endowed Schools in Ireland* and *Biographical Sketches*, the latter being fifty in number.

look out from the Hoe, the Devil's Point at Stonehouse, or other points commanding the sea beyond the Breakwater, for the purpose of reporting to them the appearance of the homeward-bound vessel off Plymouth Sound.' On one Sunday morning Hunt got notice of the expected vessel's approach. 'We were alongside the steamer before she was moored,' he says. 'I lost no time in boarding, obtaining the parcels of letters and papers for "The Daily News" and questioning the captain, the steward, and some passengers as to the incidents of the voyage home and the state of feeling in the colony, and having distributed some recent newspapers I had brought with me from the shore, I turned my face landwards. I hastened to the railway station and, as the train for London had left, I put myself in communication with the traffic-manager, and arranged for a special train, and while it was being got ready I ran home for such articles as I thought indispensable for a journey to London. On returning to the station I found the train, consisting of an engine and tender and one first-class carriage, ready. I made towards it, but, before reaching it, heard my friend Stevens, of "The Times," calling to me. I was not sorry to see him, for I was only instructed to "keep pace with 'The Times,'" and, having ascertained what the cost of the train would be, I felt a little doubtful how the cost would be regarded in Bouverie Street, and moreover I felt it would be more pleasant to have company than to travel alone all the way to London.' The two friends tore along in their special train, writing out their notes and eating their dinner on the way. At Bristol they overtook the regular train which had left Plymouth two hours before them, and there they took their seats in one of the carriages. 'We reached London rather later than we ought to have done; but I arrived at the "Daily News"

office time enough for my summary of the news to appear in the paper the same morning, and also a leader, written by Mr. Knight Hunt, the editor, after I had repeated to him the intelligence, which included a victory over the Kaffirs by General Sir Harry Smith.'¹

¹ William Hunt, *Then and Now*, pp. 46-49.

CHAPTER XIX.

‘ THE TIMES ’ UNDER DELANE.

1841—1855.

JOHN THADDEUS DELANE was editor of ‘ The Times ’ during more than a third of a century ; but the first fourteen years of that long term, in some respects more important and noteworthy than the remaining two-and-twenty, cover by themselves a distinct stage of newspaper history. Through a concurrence of causes and accidents which favoured the exercise of Delane’s talents, ‘ The Times ’ rose to its highest point of influence and power before the abolition of the compulsory newspaper stamp had cleared the way for the full development of journalistic enterprise and for the working out of new rivalries. Since 1855 the conditions have altered, and have been constantly altering, and no skill or zeal has contrived to maintain ‘ The Times ’ in the unique position it formerly held.

Delane was born on October 11, 1817, and, after taking his degree at Oxford, had made some study of medicine, law, and other subjects before 1839 when he was first employed on ‘ The Times.’ His father, a solicitor, and a Berkshire neighbour of John Walter’s, had before then become connected with the paper as a business adviser, and the proprietor seems to have discovered at an early date the young man’s abilities.

Barnes's sudden death in May 1841, preceded by that of an older colleague who had expected to succeed to the post, caused a vacancy which Delane was called upon to fill before he was twenty-four.¹ The appointment, if venturesome, proved to be most fortunate.

'The Times' had already far surpassed all the other London daily papers in circulation and authority, and Delane seems to have been singularly well fitted to advance its interests. Barnes had been courted by statesmen and the magnates of society, but had only been regarded by them as a person whom it was necessary to tolerate and propitiate. The new editor was at once made a friend of by fashionable people and astute politicians, and his good breeding and tact caused him to be a welcome guest at dinner parties and in drawing-rooms, where his predecessor and most of his compeers would have been ill at ease. His special patron, it would appear, was Charles Greville, the clerk to the privy council, a busy wirepuller, whose office brought him into intimate relations with the leading men of all parties;² and he rapidly advanced in favour with others, when it was found that he was a safe recipient of political confidences, and generally a discreet interpreter of the wishes and intentions of men in power. He knew how to win respect, and how to make himself feared where he was not liked. Writing little himself at that time, and hardly anything at all in later years, he was

¹ *Times*, November 25, 1879.

² 'The friendly relations which had for some time subsisted between Mr. Greville and Mr. Barnes,' says Mr. Henry Reeve, Greville's editor, 'were strengthened and consolidated under the administration of his successor. Mr. Delane was well aware that he would nowhere meet with a more sagacious adviser or a more valuable ally. He owed to Mr. Greville his first introduction to political society, of which he made so excellent a use, and where he gradually acquired the esteem of all parties, and a position which no editor of a newspaper had before enjoyed.'—*Greville Memoirs* (Second Part), vol. ii. p. 3, note.

an apt instructor and critic of the writers under him, and, with ample means at his command, he was able to employ as many clever writers as he needed, reserving himself for use of his peculiar faculty as a journalist in polishing and sharpening the articles written for him by others.

Delane's editorship began at a time of political crisis that gave him early opportunity for distinguishing himself. Lord Melbourne's long-tottering ministry, which had been almost consistently opposed by the potentates of Printing House Square, was defeated in June 1841, and the general election that followed in July placed the Tories in an overwhelming majority, a result which, though it could hardly have been otherwise, 'The Times' claimed and obtained credit for largely promoting by its vigorous attacks on the disorganised Whigs. When Sir Robert Peel took office in September the paper was in a position to profit by the turn of public opinion and to dictate with some effect to the new government. It was not ostensibly, or even really, a ministerial organ. Purporting, as was its wont, to be an independent onlooker and mentor, and to support no policy that it did not approve, it adopted a supercilious attitude and was often violently antagonistic towards those in office; its object and well-planned method, however, being to control rather than to thwart their proceedings, and above all, by securing early information as to the course of those proceedings and by putting a cloak of omniscience over its extensive knowledge, to give an appearance of leading where it might be only following.

The five years of Peel's administration were years of exceptional confusion in the political world, where popular movements, which had been gaining strength ever since the passing of the Reform Act in 1832, had to

be dealt with, and the old conditions of party warfare—with a few great Whig and Tory families in keen rivalry for place and power, and agreed only on the necessity of holding the nation in general at bay—had to be abandoned or reshaped in accordance with altogether new exigencies. Lord Melbourne's government had broken down because its members were at feud with one another and quite unable to cope with the forces opposed to them, deserted by the Radicals whom they had played with and betrayed too often, and despised by the Tories, among whom, however, there was as little cohesion, and who differed widely as to the principles to be served and the tactics to be followed in working out reforms, or in propitiating the multitude without yielding more than could be helped to its demands. When Peel took office he had to reckon with men like the Duke of Wellington—who, though not at first in the cabinet, was commander-in-chief and the real head of the old Tory party—and Lord Wharncliffe and the Duke of Buckingham, who were perforce his colleagues, and with others like Sir James Graham and Lord Aberdeen, his home and foreign secretaries, and such younger and bolder Tory revolutionaries outside as Lord George Bentinck and Benjamin Disraeli soon proved themselves to be. The social complications and their political bearings which had to be faced were aptly illustrated in 'Coningsby' and 'Sybil'; and though such domestic concerns as Chartism and Tractarianism, poor-law reform, and above all the corn-law question, and, only second to it, the various elements of trouble in Ireland, were of paramount importance, foreign difficulties were not slight, whether incident to the meddlings of Louis Philippe's government in European affairs, to the English disputes with the United States which were then serious, or to such expansions of our

remote eastern policy as showed themselves in the Afghan disasters and the Sikh war.

On all these and on all cognate subjects, Peel, either from honest conviction or on intelligent prudential grounds, was inclined towards more Liberal action than the old-fashioned Tories favoured, and he needed all the help he could get, from journalists and others, in educating some of his colleagues in office, and many members of his own party, as well as the public at large. 'The Times,' under Delane, while personally attacking him, helped his cause considerably in such ways as seemed good to it, with much prejudice and more arrogance, but in ways that were too serviceable for him to take much umbrage at whatever was ungracious in their method or adverse in their details. Delane knew how to use his opportunity, though it is evident that during the lifetime of his first employer, the John Walter who died in 1847, and who had strong political views that it was incumbent on the editor to enforce, he had by no means so free a hand as afterwards.

'The Morning Chronicle,' in 1841, was still edited by John Black, and in the main a zealous supporter of Whig policy, with strong leaning to the line pursued by Lord Palmerston, whose sympathies were in many respects more Conservative than Liberal, and in some more Conservative than those of Peel, and those of his associates in office with whom he most agreed. 'The Times,' though often urging the new government to be bolder in its foreign policy than it inclined to be, was not violent enough for the Palmerstonians, while on most domestic concerns, in so far as it opposed the government, its opposition was as much anti-Radical as that of 'The Chronicle' was Radical in its tendencies. When Peel introduced his first budget in March 1842,

reviving Pitt's scheme of an income tax and thus finding means to dispense with some duties on foreign imports, 'The Times' condemned the change in guarded terms, writing in the interests of the wealthy merchants and great landowners with whom it was nearly always in accord. On the other hand it encouraged the government in its resolve to keep as clear as it could of the foreign entanglements that Palmerston was anxious to promote, and in this it did good service.

An instance occurred in the autumn of 1842, when the Washington treaty negotiated by Lord Ashburton for settling the disputes as to the boundary-line between Canada and Maine was under discussion. "The Morning Chronicle," Greville wrote on September 24, 'opened a fire upon the American treaty in the beginning of last week, which has been well sustained in a succession of articles of very unequal merit. To these "The Times" has responded, and in my opinion very successfully. It was amusing to me to read in the columns of "The Chronicle" all that I had been hearing Palmerston say, *totidem verbis*. His articles were merely a repetition of his talk, and that as exactly as if the latter had been taken down in shorthand.' And on October 4 Greville added, 'there has been a continual discussion of the boundary treaty, kept up by Palmerston's articles in "The Morning Chronicle," which have been well replied to in "The Times" and "The Standard," and still more "The Spectator" and "The Examiner."' ¹

Many of Greville's entries in his diary illustrate the progress of newspaper controversy in those days, and its growing importance in guiding public opinion, especially as it was conducted by 'those not very unequal antagonists,' 'The Times' and 'The Chronicle.' 'The bishop of London,' he wrote in October 1842, for

¹ *Greville Memoirs* (Second Part), vol. ii. pp. 105, 109.

instance, 'was and is still going about his diocese delivering a very elaborate charge, which has excited a good deal of notice, and parts of which have been well enough quizzed in "The Morning Chronicle." To the surprise of many people, his charge, like those of the bishops of Exeter and Oxford, contains some crumbs of compliment to the Puseyites, and an endeavour to prescribe some formal observances half-way in advance towards their opinions. It is curious, too, to see "The Times," which certainly exercises no small or limited influence, become decidedly Puseyite. Its Catholic tendencies are intermingled with its poor-law crotchets, and both are of a highly democratic character.'¹

The poor-law crotchets of 'The Times,' certainly not of a democratic character, were due to the strong prejudices of the proprietor, which in those days influenced the paper in many ways. Walter had entered parliament as a Whig in 1832, but, as 'The Times' showed, he soon quarrelled with Lord Grey's government, and especially with its more Radical members, among them being Sir James Graham. Graham in conjunction with Grote and others helped to obtain the reform of the poor laws in 1835, and this measure was constantly and vehemently denounced by Walter, who, now holding dignified rank among the Berkshire gentry and member for the county, shared the views of the old-fashioned squires and clergy as to the virtue of the system of indiscriminate charity and patronage of pauperism which the reformers assailed. It was in consequence of his strong holding of these views that Walter lost his parliamentary seat in 1837, and his personal animosity against Graham was not lessened when the latter took office as a Tory under Sir Robert Peel. Against Peel also he had a grudge, which biassed his

¹ *Greville Memoirs* (Second Part), vol. ii. p. 112.

own action in parliament when, being elected member for Nottingham in 1841, he again had a place in it ;¹ and his dislike both of the premier and of his home secretary was made manifest in 'The Times,' even when it endorsed their public conduct.

At both of these ministers 'The Times' sneered whenever opportunity offered or could be found. In July 1844 such an opportunity arose out of the complaints that were made about the opening of Mazzini's letters at the Post Office under Sir James Graham's warrant. 'The press took it up,' said Greville ; 'the Whig press as a good ground of attack on the government, and especially Graham ; and "The Times," merely from personal hatred of Graham, whom they are resolved to write down if they can on account of his honest support of the poor law.' A select committee was appointed to inquire into the matter ; but 'this concession by no means disarmed his opponents, and "The Times," particularly, has continued to attack him with the utmost virulence, but so coarsely and unfairly as quite to overshoot the mark.' A year before that, on the introduction of Peel's Irish Arms Bill in June 1843, 'The Times' had attacked the measure 'in articles of extraordinary violence,' though certainly not in consequence of any kindly feelings to the Irish ; and a year later, when in April, 1845, Peel brought forward his scheme for endowing Maynooth College, 'The Times' kept pegging away in a series of articles as mischievous as malignity could make them, and, in Greville's opinion, 'by far the most disgraceful that ever appeared on a political subject in any public journal.'²

¹ 'Walter came in for Nottingham,' says Greville, 'on an anti-poor-law cry, and by the union of Chartists and Tories to defeat the Whig candidate.'—*Greville Memoirs* (Second Part), vol. i. p. 391.

² *Ibid.*, vol. ii. pp. 249, 250, 189, 279.

Though thus at variance with Peel's government on many subjects, 'The Times' still gave it a large measure of support, and was much in its confidence, Lord Aberdeen, the foreign secretary, being Delane's chief friend in Downing Street. The scandalous policy of the French court in forcing Queen Isabella of Spain and her sister to marry Louis Philippe's kinsmen was notified to Lord Aberdeen while he was at Ostend in 1843. 'As soon as Aberdeen returned to London,' it was reported by Greville, to whom Delane confided the information; 'he sent for Delane and told him this; for notwithstanding the hostile and offensive tone which "The Times" has adopted towards the government generally, particularly Peel and Graham, this formidable paper is in a sort of alliance with the Foreign Office, and the communications between Lord Aberdeen and Delane are regular and frequent.'¹

The most memorable communication of all was made in December 1845, in anticipation of the abolition of the corn laws.

'The Times,' as has been noted, had as far back as 1839 denounced the duties on imported grain, while nearly all the other newspapers had supported them; but it took a different view in 1842 when Peel gave the first intimation of his desire to effect the urgently needed reform. Its opposition, however, was not to a reduction of the duty, which indeed it was always willing to dispense with altogether, but to Peel's sliding scale. In this view it agreed with Richard Cobden and others whom as Radicals it detested.

Richard Cobden, who had entered parliament in 1841, made his first speech in the course of the debate on Peel's proposal of a sliding scale, and also objected to it, not on the ground of its going as far as it went,

¹ *Greville Memoirs* (Second Part), vol. ii. p. 200.

but because it did not go far enough and was an insult to the people who were starving under a protective tariff. John Bright has told how, listening to the speech from the gallery of the House of Commons, he at the same time observed the deportment of Horace Twiss, then one of the principal writers on 'The Times,' who sat near him. 'He appeared to have the greatest possible horror of anybody who was a manufacturer or a calico printer coming down into the assembly to teach our senators wisdom. As the speech went on, I watched his countenance and heard his observations; and when Mr. Cobden sat down, he said with a careless gesture, "Nothing in him; he is only a barker."'¹ Cobden continued to be despised as 'a barker,' and denounced as a Radical incendiary, all through the years of the anti-corn-law agitation, although now and then 'The Times' was constrained, while deploring that the movement should have such incendiaries for leaders, to admit that Cobden and his friends of the Anti-Corn-law League were doing useful work. 'The League is a great fact,' it declared, in a tone of sorrow, on November 18, 1843. 'It would be foolish—nay, rash—to deny its importance. It is a great fact that there should have been created in the homesteads of our manufacturers a confederacy devoted to the agitation of one political question, persevering at it year after year, shrinking from no trouble, dismayed by no danger, making light of every obstacle.' 'No moralist can disregard them,' it said of this and other facts; 'no politician can sneer at them; no statesman can undervalue them. He who collects opinions must chronicle them; he who frames laws must to some extent consult them.'

'The Times' would have been much better pleased had Sir Robert Peel's government consulted and obeyed

¹ G. Barnett Smith, *Life of John Bright*, vol. i. p. 144.

it instead of taking orders from the Anti-Corn-law League. But it showed more magnanimity than might have been expected from it in welcoming the change when it was made at the instigation of others, and it had unalloyed satisfaction in being allowed to startle the world by a premature announcement of the change as soon as it had been resolved upon.

The story of this announcement is remarkable, and, as Greville said, 'presents a curious under-current in politics,' and of newspaper influence therein. The state of the country had become desperate, stormy meetings being held everywhere, at which the government was called upon to save the people from famine by abolishing the corn dues, and Peel had agreed with Aberdeen, Graham, and some others of his colleagues, though not with the more Tory half of his cabinet, that the demand must be complied with, when, on November 22, 1845, Lord John Russell issued a letter to his constituents, avowing that the time had come for a compromise between the Whigs and the followers of Peel by the former's acceptance of Peel's offer of a sliding scale against which they had hitherto protested. 'Let us unite,' he said, 'to put an end to a system which has been proved to be the blight of commerce, the bane of agriculture, the source of bitter division among the classes, the cause of penury, fever, mortality, and crime among the people.' 'The Times' published this letter, along with an article objecting to it. Thereupon, according to Greville, 'Aberdeen sent for Delane, and told him that Peel considered the letter mischievous, but the article far more mischievous than the letter. In the course of this and other conversations he gave Delane to understand what his own opinions were, and told him pretty clearly what sort of a contest was going on in the cabinet.' A week later, on December 3,

Aberdeen again sent for Delane, and told him that at a cabinet meeting on the previous day Peel had threatened to resign unless he was allowed to have his way, and that this threat had induced the chief members, who had hitherto been obdurate, to yield. 'After his communication to Delane, Aberdeen asked him what he meant to do with what he had told him. "Publish it," he answered, "to be sure!"' Aberdeen had two motives for thus revealing an important cabinet secret to the editor of 'The Times.' As a free trader, he was anxious to force his colleagues to keep their word. As a foreign secretary, he was anxious to promptly conciliate the United States government with which he was then discussing the Oregon difficulty. 'Yesterday,' Greville wrote on the 5th, 'the American mail went off, and it took with it the morning papers, and, consequently, this article in "The Times." It was exactly what Aberdeen wanted. His most earnest desire is to get over the Oregon affair as well as he can, and he knows that nothing will have so great an effect in America, nothing tend so materially to the prevalence of pacific counsels, as an announcement that our corn-laws are going to be repealed.'¹

The effects in England were more immediate. 'The whole town was electrified,' Greville reports, by the article in 'The Times' of December 4, 'announcing, with an air of certainty and authority, that the discussions and disputes in the cabinet had terminated by a resolution to call parliament together early in January and propose a total repeal of the corn laws, and that the duke had not only consented but was to bring forward the measure in the House of Lords. Nobody knew whether to believe this or not, though all seem staggered, and the more so because "The Standard," though affect-

¹ *Greville Memoirs* (Second Part), vol. i. pp. 310-313.

ing to disbelieve "The Times" and treating it as a probable fiction, did not contradict it from authority—as might naturally have been expected, if it had been untrue.¹ 'The Morning Herald' gave a more emphatic contradiction next day; but 'The Times,' more than usually contemptuous in its references to Mrs. Harris and Mrs. Gamp, as it always called its morning and evening Tory contemporaries, reiterated its assertion on the 6th and again on the 8th. As we now know the contradiction was partly correct. The Earl of Aberdeen had misinformed Delane, or allowed him to misunderstand his statement. The cabinet, as a whole, had not agreed to Peel's proposal on the 3rd, the Duke of Wellington, who had lately joined the government as president of the council, as well as Lord Stanley, Lord Wharncliffe, and Lord Ripon, being obstinate; and Aberdeen had evidently hoped that the premature and inaccurate announcement in 'The Times' would force them to consent. As things turned out it led to a breaking up of the cabinet on the 5th when, Wellington and his allies refusing to sanction the reform, Peel had no option but to resign.

Neither of this, however, nor of its sequel was Delane informed by his friend in Downing Street. 'On Monday,' Greville wrote on December 9, 'I looked with anxiety for the article in "The Times," and found only a calm adhesion to its story. Delane had seen Aberdeen the evening before, who said to him that he had not said a bit too much, except that his statement the second day, that "the heads of the government had agreed," was more correct than that of the first, which said "the cabinet" had. He desired him to go on in the same strain, reasoning on it as a fact. He gave him, however, to understand that the publication had

¹ *Greville Memoirs* (Second Part), vol. ii. p. 309.

created considerable agitation. Delane in the course of conversation said that the whole thing turned on the Duke of Wellington, whether he was consenting or not, but Aberdeen would not tell him which way the duke was.' 'Wharncliffe,' Greville further reported, 'told me that Peel was very angry at the article in "The Times," and sent a messenger to the queen thereupon. There is no doubt that Delane in the excitement of the moment said more, much more, than he ought to have said, for the cabinet, so far from being agreed on a measure, was in a state of disagreement amounting almost to dissolution. Delane was very imprudent, for he might have guarded his statement, and yet produced precisely the same effect.' And on the 12th Greville added, 'Yesterday all was known. Peel had resigned on Saturday, but the ministers kept that secret ; nor did Aberdeen tell Delane the state of the case. I suppose he was afraid to tell him any more.'¹

Delane proceeded without ministerial guidance or misguidance. 'Yesterday morning,' wrote Greville on the 13th, 'I called on Wharncliffe, who was still ill in bed and very low. He complained of "The Times" for saying that the Duke of Wellington had broken up the government by changing his mind, first consenting and then withdrawing his consent ; that "it was hard on the old man," who had behaved admirably throughout, never having flinched or changed, but he had said to Peel that he (Peel) was a better judge of this question than himself, and he would support him in whatever course he might take. I said "the old man" would probably not see the paper, and certainly not care a straw if he did. I told him everybody asked why they had resigned, and, when the day of explana-

¹ *Greville Memoirs* (Second Part), vol. ii. pp. 315, 316.

tion came, that it would be difficult to give a satisfactory answer to the question. He said he thought so too ; that he never could see any sufficient reason (it being now sufficiently clear that the supposed deficiency of food would furnish none) ; but that from the beginning Peel and Graham, especially Graham, had appeared panic-struck, and would hear no reasons against the course they had resolved upon ; that Lord Heytesbury had contributed to this panic by his representations ; that the original statement in "The Times" was the most extraordinary, because on the very day when it appeared, Thursday, the government was virtually broken up.¹ Peel resolved to repeal the corn laws, but only to attempt it provided he could do so with a unanimous cabinet. This he found was impossible, and that very Thursday he determined to resign. They begged him not to be in a hurry. He said he would not, and would take twenty-four hours to consider it. He did so, and on Friday he announced to his colleagues that he persisted in his resolution, and should go down the next day to Osborne to resign.'²

These details of gossip are interesting as showing, along with other things, the share which 'The Times' had in bringing about the abolition of the corn laws. Peel, Graham, Aberdeen, and others in the cabinet saw that the revolution could no longer be delayed, and that they had already delayed so long that Lord John Russell and the Whigs had stolen a march on them in yielding to Cobden and the repealers ; but the Peel half of the cabinet was still haggling with the Wellington half, and likely to procrastinate till it was too late, when 'The Times' article of December 4 forced on an immediate settlement, which was all the more

¹ But only after *The Times* article had shattered it.

² *Greville Memoirs* (Second Part), vol. ii. p. 318.

complete because it began with an alarming unsettlement.

What followed is matter of general history. After Peel's resignation on December 6 Russell tried to form a cabinet but failed, chiefly because Palmerston was a protectionist and declined to join him, and Peel became premier again on the 24th, with the Duke of Buccleuch—instead of Lord Wharncliffe, who had died in the interval—as lord president of the council, and with William Ewart Gladstone—instead of Lord Stanley, whose protectionism was steadfast, and who was presently to become Earl of Derby—as colonial secretary. In February 1846 Peel brought forward his great measure, during the long debate on which, as Greville said, 'the Liberals, while they support Peel, encourage and confirm the Tories in their indignation and resentment, and they abuse the government quite as lustily, not for what they are doing now, but for all they have been saying and doing for the last four years. The whole of the press takes the same line, the Tory and Whig papers naturally; and "The Times" chuckles and sneers, and alternately attacks and ridicules Whigs, Protectionists, and Peelites.'¹ On June 25 the Corn Bill obtained third reading in the House of Lords; but on the same night second reading was refused in the House of Commons to the Irish Coercion Bill by a majority of 292 to 219. The Tories hated Peel more than they loved oppression in Ireland, and in consequence of their spite Lord John Russell became prime minister in July.

With the new government 'The Times' promptly established relations similar, but in some respects different, to those it had maintained with the old one. Its great bugbear, Lord Palmerston, had succeeded

¹ *Greville Memoirs* (Second Part), vol. ii. p. 367.

Delane's chief patron, Lord Aberdeen, as foreign secretary, and it continued, though less violently, to oppose the Palmerstonian policy. Of Lord John Russell, moreover, it had no better opinion personally than of Peel; but there was fair excuse for its seeking an alliance with him, and this was done as soon as possible after the seals had been transferred.¹

Changes had come about and were developing in the newspaper world, as part of the general growth of public opinion and its bearing on political and social affairs in which corn-law reform was but an incident. 'The Daily News' had been started as a bold exponent of Radicalism on all domestic if not on all foreign concerns; and 'The Morning Chronicle,' though more than ever a champion of Lord Palmerston's views, was losing influence, and had already ceased to be in any way recognised as the Whig organ.

Some curious illustrations of the rivalry between 'The Times' and 'The Chronicle,' which has been referred to in a former chapter, were noted down by Greville. 'On Friday morning,' he wrote on December 20, 1846, 'an article in "The Times" announced that the emperor of Russia was going to annex Poland to his empire, putting an end to the last vestige of Polish nationality. Yesterday morning "The Chronicle" declared this report was exaggerated, if not erroneous, and that all that was contemplated was the abrogation of custom-house regulations between the Russian and Polish frontiers. The history of these contradictory articles is this. On Wednesday at the cabinet dinner Palmerston brought this piece of news, communicated to him by Bunsen, who was in a great state of alarm and indignation, and said that Metternich was equally alarmed and eager to do something. The next morning

¹ *Greville Memoirs* (Second Part), vol. ii. p. 406.

Palmerston saw Brunnow, and asked him whether this story was true. Brunnow said he had never heard one word of it, and did not believe it. He had, however, written to Nesselrode to ask what the real truth was. Palmerston, without doubt, on this sent the article to "The Morning Chronicle"—there is a phrase at the end of it about Guizot quite Palmerstonian. It is amusing to see the two papers moved by different ministerial interests. John Russell told me at Windsor yesterday that he believed the first account.¹ This account was probably inspired by Russell himself, or by Sir Charles Wood, the chancellor of the exchequer, who was one of Delane's new friends in office.

In January 1847 Greville went to Paris on an 'officious' mission to inquire into the feud then going on between Thiers and Guizot, who were severally supported in the English cabinet by Palmerston and Russell, and its bearings on British interests. "The Times," he wrote on the 20th, 'has been writing articles abusing Palmerston and giving out that public opinion is all against him, and inclines to Guizot, doing all the mischief it can. These articles were received with a great deal of chuckling by Guizot and his people.' 'Yesterday morning,' he added on the 26th, "'The Morning Chronicle' came, with a bitter and violent article against Guizot's speech in the chamber. I found Guizot furious at this article, which he said he was sure had been dictated by Palmerston himself.' This partisanship gave great offence at home as well as abroad. 'Aberdeen is in a state of violent indignation at the brutal and stupid attacks on him in "The Morning Chronicle," which he attributes to Palmerston,' wrote Greville on February 3; 'and he is so provoked that he says he is disposed to bring on a foreign discussion

¹ *Greville Memoirs* (Second Part) vol. iii. p. 4.

after all, that he may vindicate himself.' And two years later, on January 19, 1849, we read: 'Palmerston has been dreadfully nettled at some recent attacks on him in "The Times." Charles Wood sent for Delane, and entreated him to desist from these bitter attacks, and he promised he would for the present; he said they had recorded their opinions and did not want to do any more.' For all that, 'there was an article in "The Times" on Thursday, in which, though there was no attack on Palmerston, who was not named, there was an allusion to former articles and to our conduct to Austria, which evidently rubbed on a sore place, for Charles Wood sent for Delane and expressed his regret that we were on such bad terms with Austria. Delane said he had all along been saying the same thing, when Charles Wood replied that he did not think we had *done* anything we could not justify and defend, but unfortunately Palmerston's manner of doing things and the language he employed had given great offence, and that it was much to be regretted that he had given advice and expressed opinions in so offensive a tone as he had done, especially to Austria.'¹ The scandal here particularly hinted at was one that 'The Times' had brought to light. It found that, with the connivance of Lord Palmerston, stores were being shipped from Woolwich for the use of the Sicilian insurgents, and for this breach of neutrality Lord John Russell, who was first informed about it by the newspaper article, caused an apology to be made.²

¹ *Greville Memoirs* (Second Part), vol. iii. pp. 39, 42, 52, 260, 261.

² 'Mr. Delane,' says Mr. Henry Reeve, 'knew Hood, the army contractor, a man who used to hunt with the old Surrey hounds, and by accident learnt from Hood all this story. *The Times* perceived the importance of it, and soon afterwards charged the government with having connived at a supply of arms from the queen's stores to the Sicilian insurgents. No notice was taken of this first charge. It was therefore

An important event in the history of 'The Times' occurred in 1847. 'Yesterday young Mr. Walter was brought to the office and introduced to me,' Greville reported on February 25. 'Old Walter is dying, and his son is about to succeed (in fact has succeeded) to the throne of "The Times," and to all the authority, influence, and power which the man who wields that sceptre can exercise. He seems mild, sensible, and gentleman-like.'¹ The second John Walter died on July 28, at the age of sixty-three, having been the zealous manager of his paper, and something more, during nearly forty-four years. When he commenced his work 'The Times' was a small, four-paged sheet, printed by hand, with a circulation of barely more than 1,000 a day. When he left it, the eight large pages which were its normal size, contained at least six times as much matter as a copy of 1803, and these were often increased by pressure of advertisements or news to twelve, and sometimes sixteen pages, the printing being done by elaborate machinery, now greatly improved from the method invented by Koenig in 1814, and the circulation having been increased at least thirty-fold.

'The Times' had already become the most prosperous and influential paper in the world, and its success was mainly owing to Walter's enterprise as a man of rare business qualities, joined with no little political shrewdness. It was faulty in many ways, and its faults were partly due to Walter's own prejudices and to

repeated in stronger language. Upon this Lord John Russell (who knew nothing of the matter) took it up, and said he must inquire into it, and that the charge must be contradicted or the practice stopped. On inquiry he found it was all perfectly true, and he compelled Lord Palmerston, sorely against his will, to make a formal official apology to the King of Naples, the man whom he most hated and despised in the whole world.'—*Greville Memoirs* (Second Part), vol. iii. p. 272, note.

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 64.

inclinations which his enemies denounced as sordid and unscrupulous. There was much, however, to be said in excuse, if not in justification, of the shiftings of policy for which 'The Times' was notorious, and it was aptly said by the writer of Walter's epitaph in his paper. 'He was ever ready'—we are there told—'to measure the most plausible schemes, the most popular opinion, the most promising experiments, the most dominant parties, the most powerful ministries, the most established reputations, the most inveterate usages, the most subtle advances, the most overbearing classes, the most formidable combinations. Whilst other men found a refuge for intellectual weakness or moral instability in pledging their faith to a statesman, a party, a theory, or a class, he never forgot that such things were made for man, not man for them. No sooner did he perceive that a party was irreclaimably selfish, or a minister irremediably committed to anti-national measures, to corrupt associations, or to an imbecile and therefore injurious policy—no sooner was it evident that the temptations incident to power had prevailed over the public spirit of the statesman, than he promptly and openly withdrew the support that had been tendered only for the public advantage. A slavish attachment to a man, or a clique, or a class, or a crotchet, he justly despised as the hollow and too often criminal consistency of fools and of knaves, whose whole and sole boast is that they have never, excepting by accident, done any good thing.'¹

The third John Walter was twenty-nine when he succeeded to the chief proprietorship of 'The Times.' Elected member for Nottingham, on the day after his father's death, as 'a Liberal Conservative, advocating those measures which obtain the common support of moderate Whigs and moderate Tories,' he had much to

¹ *Times*, July 29, 1847.

occupy himself with besides the details of a newspaper office. He appears to have attended, during many years, with inherited intelligence and energy, to the business concerns, and especially to such mechanical improvements as experience and outside example suggested. In 1848 he introduced Applegarth's steam printing machinery, by means of which, using eight circular cylinders, 10,000 copies could be printed in an hour; and many other changes of this sort were due to his boldness and perseverance. The responsibility for all editorial arrangements, however, was probably left more than heretofore with Delane, who now, after six years' learning and practising of his craft, was, at the age of thirty, a thorough master of it.

Journalism had made considerable progress and been developed in many ways during these six years, and 'The Times,' with ampler space to fill and more money to spend than were available for any of its rivals, took the lead in nearly all other directions as well as in strictly political writing. The fresh competition of 'The Daily News,' after 1846, and the revived competition of 'The Morning Chronicle' for a few years after it became the Peelite organ in 1848, which stimulated even 'The Morning Post,' 'The Morning Herald,' 'The Standard,' and other papers to new exertions, was not allowed by 'The Times' to supersede it in any department of newspaper enterprise.

There has always been more effort at anonymity in 'The Times' than in most other papers, and, while Delane was fond of speaking of himself as 'the man who worked "The Times,"' the names of many of the most zealous workmen under him are hardly known, or, if known, it is only possible to assign to them in a few instances the special kind and quantity of work they severally contributed to the common or uncommon

stock. For nearly a quarter of a century after 1845 Delane's chief assistant in the editorship, and a frequent contributor of articles, was his college friend and brother-in-law, George Webbe Dasent; and conspicuous among his numerous leader writers in the early years of his rule were Horace Twiss, George Wingrove Cooke, Canon Moseley, Alexander Knox, and Gilbert a'Beckett, soon to be reinforced or replaced by Austin Henry Layard, Robert Lowe (afterwards Lord Sherbrooke), Matthew Higgins (best known as Jacob Omnium), Sidney Godolphin Osborne (best known as S. G. O.), and many others, including Charles Greville and his friend Henry Reeve, and even the Radical Roebuck. Samuel Phillips, some of whose articles were reprinted as 'Essays from "The Times,"' wrote much on literary and other subjects until his death in 1857, and John Oxenford was dramatic and musical critic for nearly thirty years after 1847, while Tom Taylor, who began newspaper work on 'The Morning Chronicle' and 'The Daily News,' joined the staff of 'The Times' not much latter as a writer on art and other matters. A more serviceable contributor than some of these was William Howard Russell, who began to work for Delane in 1843, when he was only twenty-two, and who went to Ireland in 1845 to furnish graphic accounts of the potato famine.

To all the social movements and disturbances of the stirring years of agricultural and industrial distress before and after the middle of the nineteenth century, of political agitation shown in such diverse enterprises as the Chartist propaganda and the work of the Anti-Corn-law League, of commercial recklessness, culminating in the railway mania, and so forth, 'The Times' paid quite as much attention as its contemporaries, its handling being often less generous or gushing than

that of some other commentators, but as much more thorough as its ampler space and resources allowed, and as was consistent with the position it claimed for itself as the great instructor and controller of public opinion and of legislative action thereon. It is especially to its credit that while the railway mania was growing, and till it collapsed, in 1846, 'The Times,' almost alone among the leading newspapers of the day, persistently and earnestly denounced the folly and crime that were thus being fostered, and this notwithstanding the temptations to which it was exposed of encouraging a craze, that, while it was at its height, added some 4,000*l.* or 5,000*l.* a week to its revenue from advertisements. Illustration of its good work in another way appeared in its employment of James Caird, who was assisted by John C. Macdonald, a young barrister of the Inner Temple, on a tour of inspection through all the agricultural districts, in order to inquire into the causes of the prevalent distress, which had been only alleviated by the reform of the corn laws, and to suggest remedies of more permanent efficacy than any that legislation could effect. Starting from Aylesbury in January 1850, travelling through all the southern, western, eastern, northern, and midland counties of England, and reaching Huntingdon in February 1851, Caird in the course of those thirteen months supplied fifty-one weighty letters to 'The Times,' which, with five others summing up his conclusions, in December 1851, were afterwards issued as a standard book on 'English Agriculture in 1850-51.' Other letters of great value came from him in later years; and Caird was only one of a crowd of writers on matters supplementary to the political questions of the hour.

'I remember, the first time I spoke in public after returning home from the continent in 1847,' said

Cobden in 1857, speaking at Manchester in support of John Bright's candidature, 'I took the opportunity of saying that the newspaper press of England was not free, and that the reformers of England ought to set about to emancipate it. Well, I got a most vicious article next day from "The Times" for that, and "The Times" has followed us both with a very ample store of venom ever since.' 'Any man,' he added, 'who has lived in public life as I have must know that it is quite useless to contradict any falsehood or calumny, because it comes up again next day just as rife as ever. There is "The Times" newspaper always ready to repeat it; and the grosser the better.'¹ 'My plan,' he declared in a letter to a friend in 1861, 'has always been to meet that journal with a bold front, and neither to give nor to take quarter. I may add that if ever I have succeeded in any public proceedings it has always been in spite of the opposition of that print. You may take my word for it, you never can be in the path for success in any great measure of policy unless you are in opposition to that journal.' And in another letter, addressed to a visitor from the United States, who had expressed surprise at the favours shown to Delane by political leaders and fashionable people, Cobden said, 'In America the editor or proprietor puts his name on the front of his paper, fights the battles of his party openly, shares in the honours of its victories, and is to be found among the senators, the governors of states, &c.; but with us the conductor of "The Times" preserves a strict incognito to his readers, on the plea that anonymous writing is necessary for preserving his independence, whilst he inconsistently drops the mask in the presence of those who dispense social distinctions and dispose of government patronage—the very per-

¹ *Richard Cobden's Speeches on Public Policy*, vol. ii. p. 77.

sons towards whom, in the interests of the public, he ought to preserve his independence.'¹

Though there was some excuse for his injustice, Cobden was unjust to Delane. 'The Times' was as zealous as any Radical journal could be in advocating reforms, ferreting out abuses, and condemning those responsible for them; but it chose its own objects and methods, its own standpoints and lines of action, as it had a perfect right to do, and though we may think it mistaken we have no warrant for considering it dishonest. If it attacked Cobden and the Radicals ungraciously and unreasonably, it used language as strong about the Whigs and Tories, the aristocrats and the millionaires who felt themselves flattered by Delane's dining with them, and with whose opinions, sympathies, and prejudices, he was generally in accord.²

¹ John Morley, *Life of Richard Cobden*, chapter xxxii. 'He told his friends,' Mr. Morley says of Cobden, 'in scornful tones of the social deference that was paid in private by great people to the famous editor, and was scandalised, here also rather unreasonably, to find him dining at tables where every guest but himself was an ambassador, a cabinet minister, or a bishop.' 'The conductor of a newspaper,' as Mr. Morley rightly remarks, 'is entirely at liberty to choose what constituency he will attract. It pleased *The Times* at that day to domesticate itself, it was said, among the aristocracy. This may have been a very narrow and ignoble policy, but Mr. Delane had as much right to prefer to spend his evenings among dukes and bishops as Cobden to spend his among merchants and manufacturers.'

² Very curious illustration of the way in which the conductors of *The Times* attempted to control public opinion by dictating to other newspapers, as well as by 'thundering' in their own columns, is furnished in a letter addressed to him in March 1852, by Samuel Phillips, one of the assistant editors, which has been printed by Mr. William Hunt, who was at that time editor of *The West of England Conservative*. 'It is of the highest consequence,' Phillips wrote, 'that the Conservative press of England should speak in one tone, and with the same well-defined object. I take the liberty to point out to you the particular line which that press can now adopt with the greatest advantage to the common cause.' Then follow several paragraphs of instructions, including this: 'The great rallying cry of our party at the forthcoming election must be "The Institutions of England against the assaults of Democracy." Lord John

Ambitiously assuming to itself the right and power of saying what social and political changes were good for the community and how all the foreign, as well as all the domestic, affairs of the country should be carried on, 'The Times'—with more dignity than formerly, if often preposterously, and with variations of policy, in which, as a rule, the same or similar threads of principle may be discerned by impartial critics, but which to most onlookers presented many inconsistencies—maintained its independent attitude towards Lord John Russell's administration, which lasted till the beginning of 1852, and towards Lord Derby's short-lived ministry which succeeded it. When Lord Aberdeen took office, in December 1852, the critics of 'The Times,' like a good many others, found themselves in an awkward position. There were rival factions and divided counsels in the cabinet from the first, and a much stronger and more compact government might have found it impossible to face the foreign difficulties that, growing during several years, were now approaching a crisis. Delane had nearly always given a hearty support to Lord Aberdeen, but he now favoured a bolder handling of the Eastern question than the Peelites inclined to. He had almost uniformly assailed Lord Palmerston, but he now approved of the Palmerstonian tactics, which

Russell has proposed to carry reform much further than his lordship intended, provided Mr. Cobden will join him in opposition to her majesty's government. What this means we know, especially as Sir James Graham is invited into the firm. A ministry composed of Lord John, Graham, Bright, and Cobden can have but one leading idea. Every sacrifice must be made to prevent this catastrophe, and, therefore, let us stand boldly against destructive tendencies, as it becomes the instructors of the people and the lovers of their country. "Religion against latitudinarianism," "The Monarchy," "The Church and every cherished institution of the land against the flood of bitter animosity about to pour in upon them," "Stability against Anarchy," such be our proclamations!—*Then and Now*, pp. 30-34.

Palmerston, good as a foreign secretary, if he was good at anything, was, in the home secretaryship, for which he was quite unfitted, ostensibly debarred from enforcing. Moreover, though he had for a long time been insisting on the increase of our armaments, in view of a war either with France or with Russia, Delane knew better than most men how unprepared we were for serious fighting. His embarrassments, therefore, as the would-be arbiter of the nation's destinies, and at the same time as the chief newspaper supporter of a coalition ministry made up of forces that could not possibly coalesce, were considerable.

They are illustrated by some passages in Greville's diary. 'The opposition papers, especially "The Morning Herald" and "The Press," Disraeli's new journal,' Greville wrote on June 22, 1853, 'have been making the most violent attacks on Aberdeen and Clarendon, calling for their impeachment on the ground of their conduct in this Eastern quarrel, particularly charging them with having been cognisant of, and approved of, Menschikoff's demands, which have occasioned all the hubbub. At last it was thought necessary to make a statement in reply, which was done by "The Times" on Thursday last. The article was a good one, but contained an inaccuracy about which Brunnow wrote a long but friendly letter of complaint to Clarendon. The day after this another article was inserted to set the matter right; but the explanations of "The Times" failed to stem the torrent of abuse, and the Tory papers only repeated their misrepresentations with greater impudence and malignity than before.' "The Times" newspaper, always famous for its versatility and inconsistency,' we read three weeks later, on July 12, 'has lately produced articles on the Eastern question on the same day of the most opposite characters—one warlike

and firm; the next vehemently pacific, by some other hand. This is of small importance, but it is indicative of the difference which exists in the cabinet on the subject, and the explanation of the inconsistency of "The Times" is to be found in the double influence which acts on the paper. All along Palmerston has been urging a vigorous policy, and wished to employ more peremptory language and stronger measures towards Russia, while Aberdeen has been very reluctant to do as much as we have done, and would have been well content to advise Turkey to accept the last ultimatum of Russia, and so terminate what he considers a senseless and mischievous quarrel. Clarendon has had to steer between these two extremes, and, while moderating the ardour of Palmerston, to stimulate Aberdeen and persuade him to adopt a course more congenial to public opinion in this country, which, however inclined to peace and abhorrent of war, is not at all disposed to connive at the aggrandisement of Russia or to submit to the insolent dictation of the emperor. The majority of the cabinet have supported Clarendon, and approximate more nearly to the pacific policy of Aberdeen than to the stringent measures of Palmerston. When the two articles appeared in "The Times" to which I particularly allude, Clarendon approved of the first and found great fault with the other, while Aberdeen wrote to Delane and expressed his strong approbation of the second and his conviction that the public would sooner or later take the views therein set forth.' ¹

A more steady-going supporter of Lord Aberdeen's policy than 'The Times' was 'The Morning Chronicle,' still struggling on as an organ of the Peelite party, but with a very small circulation and therefore slighted by the Peelites in office. 'They are now popularly judged,'

¹ *Greville Memoirs* (Third Part), vol. i. pp. 70, 74.

Abraham Hayward wrote peevishly to his friend Sir John Young in October 1853, 'not by their own acts and despatches, but by the vacillating tone and occasionally unprincipled articles of "The Times." Lord Aberdeen in particular has suffered greatly from being everywhere identified with "The Times."' ¹

'The Times' certainly was not a safe friend to the Aberdeen government. It urged it to be bellicose, yet did all it could to discredit Lord Palmerston, who was its most warlike member. With reason, however, it resented the shilly-shallying conduct of ministers, and, holding that the quarrel with Russia could not be patched up, it was anxious to precipitate a crisis. With this object it put pressure on the French as well as on the English authorities, sneering at their irresolution and disclosing their secrets. 'Walewski,' wrote Greville on December 24, 'has been making a great flare-up about the article in "The Times," stating that Dundas wanted to pursue the Russian fleet after Sinope, and that Baraguay d'Hilliers put his veto on the operation. Clarendon assured him the statement was inserted without his privity, and he had nothing to do with it. Walewski then asked him to authorise a formal contradiction in "The Globe," or to let it be officially contradicted in "The Moniteur." Clarendon declined the first, and advised against the latter course. I offered to speak to Delane about contradicting it in "The Times"; which I afterwards did. He said the fact was true, and he had received it from various quarters, and it was useless to contradict it; but there was no reason "The Moniteur" should not do so if they liked; so I sent him to Clarendon to talk it over and settle what was to be done to smooth the ruffled plumage of the French.' ²

¹ *Correspondence of Abraham Hayward*, vol. i. p. 194.

² *Greville Memoirs* (Third Part), vol. i. p. 119.

How little inclined 'The Times' was to smooth the ruffled plumage of either French or English may be seen from some sentences it published at the close of 1853. 'To bully the weak, to cajole the strong, to seize by force or to circumvent by fraud,' it was said, 'are now recognised as the uniform tactics of the once great upholder of order and treaties, and arbiter of the disputes of Europe. The combined governments of England and France have exhausted their diplomacy, their remonstrances, and their patience, and they now see themselves apparently reduced to the alternative of quitting for ever their high stations among the nations of the earth, forfeiting their promises and abandoning their allies, or having recourse to war—the sport of barbarous sovereigns, but the dread of free and progressive governments. There is no alternative. It is a decision. With whatever reluctance, the western powers must accept the challenge so insultingly flung at them.' 'We have not sought war,' it was added, 'we have done all in our power to avoid it; but, if it must come, we trust its evils and sacrifices will be cheerfully borne, as we are sure its perils will be manfully confronted.'¹

War was not formally declared till March 28, 1854. But all preparations for it—or, so far as the English government was concerned, all the pretences in lieu of preparations—had been made long before. The preparations made by 'The Times' were far more enterprising than there was any precedent for, and their outcome, far greater than the projectors could have dreamt of, was indeed remarkable. It already had as its correspondent in Constantinople Thomas Chenery, a learned orientalist then in his twenty-eighth year, who had sent home letters about the preliminaries of the quarrel;

¹ *Times*, December 31, 1853.

and as soon as it had been arranged that a military and naval expedition should be sent to the Crimea, it selected for its special war correspondent—a term now first employed—William Howard Russell, who, after reporting the Irish potato famine in 1845 and 1846, had gone to Denmark as a ‘Times’ correspondent in 1848, and had done other work for the paper. ‘I was with the first detachment of the British army which set foot on Turkish soil,’ said Russell, ‘and it was my good fortune to land with the first at Scutari, at Varna, and at Old Fort, to be present at Alma, Balaklava, and Inkerman, to accompany the Kertch and Kinburn expeditions, and to witness every great event of the siege, the assaults on Sebastopol and the battle on the Tchernaya. It was my still greater fortune to be able to leave the Crimea with the last detachment of our army.’¹ The vivid descriptions of what he saw during the memorable fifteen months thus occupied, printed in ‘The Times’ as they arrived by every mail, were altogether unique, and for straightforwardness and effectiveness have never been surpassed, or even equalled, by any subsequent imitations of them. They quickly raised the circulation of ‘The Times’ from about 50,000 to more than 70,000, and caused an increase of influence not to be measured by its circulation. That, however, was but a minor effect of the enterprise in which Russell so well succeeded.

His first letter home was written from Malta on March 6, and showed that he intended to be a critic as well as a chronicler. On April 8, when he reached Gallipoli, he began to point out faults and defects in the planning and carrying forward of the expedition, and in later letters he continued and improved in his self-appointed task, undeterred and only encouraged by the

¹ W. H. Russell, *The British Expedition to the Crimea*, preface.

efforts made to silence him. From Scutari he wrote on May 15 : ' I have just seen a copy of " The Times " of April 28, containing a report of a discussion in the House of Lords in which the Duke of Newcastle, in reply to a question from the Earl of Ellenborough, denies repeatedly certain statements contained in my letter of April 10, respecting the arrangements for the reception of our troops in Gallipoli. The statements in question were not put forward by me as counts in an indictment ; they were made in the discharge of my duty as recitals of matters of fact. They are true in letter and spirit, and notwithstanding all that passed in that debate, I beg once more to reiterate them from beginning to end.'¹ In that confident temper Russell persevered in his disclosures and complaints, praising as freely as he blamed wherever praise was deserved, and doing full justice to the bravery and endurance of officers and men as well as to whatever was good in the administrative arrangements ; and in spite of all the efforts made to controvert his allegations, very few of them, and none that were important, were disproved.²

In order to see for himself how matters were going on, and perhaps to quiet some doubts in his own mind as to the accuracy of Russell's charges, Delane went to the Crimea in the autumn and passed some weeks there, his companion being Alexander William Kinglake, the author of ' The History of the Crimean War.' On his return, ' he made some strong charges against the government, and particularly Newcastle,' as Greville reported. ' He complained that after the expedition

¹ W. H. Russell, *The War* (a reprint of his letters from the Crimea to *The Times*), p. 61.

² It should be mentioned that *The Morning Herald* soon followed the example of *The Times*, and sent out Nicholas Augustus Woods as its special correspondent ; and that before the close of the war several other papers had representatives on the spot.

was sent to the Crimea they remained idle, and made no attempt to form an army of reserve, or to send continual reinforcements to supply the casualties which everybody knew must occur ; and this is true. Again, he went to Newcastle, and urged him to make an immediate provision of wooden houses against the winter, which would in all probability be required, and he suggested that this should be done at Constantinople, where, all the houses being built of wood, and the carpenters very skilful, it might easily be done at a comparatively small expense, and whence the conveyance was expeditious and cheap. His advice was not taken ; nothing was done, and now that the winter is come, and the troops are already exposed to dreadful suffering and privation, the work is begun here, where it will cost four times as much and, when done, will require an enormous time to convey the houses to the Crimea, besides taking up the space that is urgently required for other purposes.' That was only a small part of Delane's complaining, and he did not confine it to private talk with ministers and friends. " 'The Times,' as usual," Greville wrote on November 26, 'has been thundering away about reinforcements, and urging the despatch of troops that do not exist, and cannot be created in a moment. I had a great battle with Delane the other day about it, and asked why he did not appeal to the French government, who have boundless military resources, instead of to ours, who have none at all, and accordingly yesterday there was a very strong article, entirely about French reinforcements.'¹

Russell's plain-speaking, and that of Delane's leader writers at home, naturally gave great offence to the authorities both in the Crimea and in England. Lord

¹ *Greville Memoirs* (Third Part), vol. i. p. 202.

Raglan, on November 13, reported that he had communicated with the correspondents of 'The Times' and other papers, and pointed out to them 'the public inconvenience of their writings, and the necessity of greater prudence in future'; and the Duke of Newcastle appealed to the patriotism of 'The Times' and other papers to abstain from publishing any intelligence from the seat of war, which could be 'considered calculated to furnish valuable information to the enemy.'¹

It was this circular, with other efforts to gag the press, that provoked the scorn and sarcasm of men like Albany Fonblanque. 'The tables are turned,' Fonblanque said in 'The Examiner.' 'The accusers are accused. The press is the bane of the army in the Crimea. "Our own correspondents" have lied away the efficiency of the expedition, and made it falsely believe itself sick, weak, hungry, and naked. "The Times" has done it all. As a man may be made ill by telling him he is looking ill, so an army may be brought to death's door by representations of its jeopardy. . . . A slut, rebuked by her mistress for some dirty corner, replied tartly, "La, ma'am, it's not my fault, it's the nasty sun that comes shining into the place, and showing every speck." And this is the retort upon the press, which is charged with the guilt of making the very mischief which it exposes for the purposes of the correction. It is the nasty light, discovering blots and foul places. We wonder that we have not been told that the reason of the superior condition of the French army is not a better organisation and more active care, but simply the absence of a free press. If the charges against the press be true, the conductors of it concerned must be persons of a malignity strange, foul, and unnatural, for, according to the accusation, they are the instruments of

¹ Andrews, vol. ii. p. 331.

both truth and falsehood, with this detestable discrimination, that the truth is all for the service of the enemy, and the falsehood all for the discouragement of our troops and the disgrace of the country in the eyes of Europe. Thus it is said that the Russians have learnt to point their guns and shape their attacks from the English newspapers, so faithfully do they describe weak places in our lines ; while, on the other hand, they as foully falsify the wisdom with which the affairs of the campaign are conducted by the able and active staff, whose merit is the everlasting and exclusive theme of Lord Raglan's praise. There is a little inconsistency in the handling of these two detestable faults, or, we should rather say, crimes.' ¹

But 'The Times' persevered in its condemnation of those who undertook to direct the Crimean war, and, doing much by its protestations and disclosures to overturn Lord Aberdeen's government, it was in no way injured by the wrath it brought upon itself from courtly critics. 'So far as I can collect,' Greville wrote on January 2, 1855, speaking, of course, for his own superior circle, 'the violent articles which "The Times" emits day after day have excited general resentment and disgust. They overdo everything, and while they are eternally changing their course, the one they follow for the moment they follow with an outrageous violence which shocks everybody. But as those who complain most of "The Times" still go on reading it, the paper only gets more rampant and insolent, for as long as its circulation is undiminished it does not care what anybody thinks or says of it.' ² Its persevering exposure of the incompetency of Lord Raglan and his staff in the Crimea, and of the equal incompetency of Lord Aberdeen's

¹ *Life and Labours of Albany Fonblanque*, p. 454.

² *Greville Memoirs* (Third Part), vol. i. p. 218.

ministry at home, brought 'general resentment and disgust,' not upon it, but upon the authors of the mischief and dishonour, and, at the threat of Roebuck's committee of inquiry, the government fell to pieces in January, to be replaced by Lord Palmerston's administration, formed and reformed in the course of February. More useful, however, than any changes 'The Times' procured in the composition of cabinets were the changes in military administration which more slowly resulted from its bold statements of facts, and its arguments thereon, chiefly supplied in Russell's letters from the seat of war.

Meanwhile good work had been done at the seat of war itself by the energy of 'The Times' in collecting by voluntary contributions a fund of 20,000*l.* to be expended in alleviating the miseries of the sick and wounded which had been to a large extent caused, and were in larger measure aggravated, by the neglect and blundering of the authorities both in England and in the Crimea. John C. Macdonald was employed to administer this fund, and, reaching Constantinople on November 7, 1854, he was promptly followed by Sidney Godolphin Osborne, and noble assistance was given to them by Florence Nightingale and her staff of nurses.¹ This bright chapter in the history of the Crimean campaign relieves, if by contrast it renders all the darker, its other and gloomy passages, and, along with Russell's rougher but not less chivalrous work, reflects great credit on Delane and the other potentates of 'The Times' for the new and patriotic developments of journalism which they initiated.

There was more and better occasion for boasting here than in the pretexts for public congratulation put forward by 'The Times' when the war was over.

¹ S. G. Osborne, *Scutari and its Hospitals*; Russell, *The War*, p. 288.

‘Whatever be the losses and disappointments we have undergone,’ it was said, ‘whatever the reverses of our arms, whatever the drains upon our treasury, these evils have been ~~is~~ nothing compared with the tremendous visitation ~~that~~ that has fallen on our stubborn and overbearing enemy. . . . There have not been wanting those who strove to persuade the masses that their blood and their treasure were being sacrificed for no adequate object, and that any concessions were better than perseverance in a war so unjust and unprofitable. But the clear instinct of Englishmen enabled them to see and feel that there was more at stake in the matter than their blind guides chose to admit, and to adhere to the cause they had taken up with a steadiness and pertinacity which put to shame the vacillating counsellors who first involved us in war and then told us that it was vain to contend with the manifest destiny that urged Russia on to the conquest of the East.’¹

If ‘The Times’ had done much towards securing for the nation some advantage from the Crimean war and towards enforcing the hard and necessary lessons taught thereby, it had also done much towards bringing about the war and strengthening its delusions. But in this it was only true to its title, and no worse than a mouth-piece of the times. The third of a century that has since elapsed has not been long enough for full education of the nation in either the ethics or the economics of this and like questions.

While the war was in progress ‘The Times’ had courteously held aloof from a rather delicate controversy, carried on somewhat indelicately by several of its contemporaries. ‘There has been,’ Greville wrote on January 15, 1854, ‘an extraordinary run against the court, more particularly against the prince, which is

¹ *Times*, December 31, 1855.

now exciting general attention, and has undoubtedly produced a considerable effect throughout the country. It began a few weeks ago in the press, particularly in "The Daily News" and "The Morning Advertiser," but chiefly in the latter, and was immediately taken up by the Tory papers, "The Morning Herald" and "The Standard," and for some time past they have poured forth article after article and letter after letter full of the bitterest abuse and all sorts of lies. "The Morning Advertiser" has sometimes had five or six articles on the same day all attacking and maligning Prince Albert. Many of these are very vague, but the charges against him are principally to this effect; that he has been in the habit of meddling improperly in public affairs, and has used his influence to promote objects of his own and the interests of his own family at the expense of the interests of this country; that he corresponds with foreign princes and with British ministers abroad without the knowledge of the government; and that he thwarts the foreign policy of the ministers when it does not coincide with his own ideas and purposes. Charges of this sort, mixed up with smaller collateral ones, have been repeated day after day with the utmost virulence and insolence by both the Radical and the Tory journals. Delane went to Aberdeen and told him that immense mischief had been done, and that he ought to know that the mischief produced was very great and general, and offered, if it was thought desirable, to take up the cudgels in defence of the court. Aberdeen consulted the prince, and they were of opinion that it was better not to put forth any defence or rebut such charges in the press, but to wait till parliament meets and take an opportunity to repel the charges there.' So 'The Times' was almost silent, and the controversy became less exciting before it could be dealt with in parliament.

‘For some days past,’ Greville reported on January 21, ‘the Tory papers have relaxed their violence against the court, while the Radical ones, especially “The Morning Advertiser,” have redoubled their attacks. There can be little doubt that the Tory leaders got alarmed and annoyed at the lengths to which their papers were proceeding, and have taken measures to stop them. The Radical papers nothing can stop, because they find their account in the libels : the sale of the “Advertiser” is enormously increased since it has begun this course, and, finding perfect immunity, it increases every day in audacity and virulence. One of the grounds of attack, in “The Morning Herald” and “The Standard” particularly, has been the illegality of the prince being a privy councillor. In reply to this I wrote a letter in my own name showing what the law and practice are.’ Again, on January 25, ‘I wrote a letter in “The Times,” signed Juvenal, showing up the lies of “The Morning Advertiser” and how utterly unworthy of credit such a paper is.’ Greville amused himself with the belief that he had thoroughly routed the enemies of Prince Albert without the intervention of Delane, except as printer of his letters, or of parliament. ‘The attacks on the prince are subsiding,’ he wrote on January 29, ‘except from “The Morning Advertiser,” which goes doggedly on in spite of its lies being exposed.’¹

When parliament met ‘The Times’ was ill-rewarded for its amiability in keeping out of a dispute on which

¹ *Greville Memoirs* (Third Part), vol. i. pp. 126-131. The matter was discussed in both houses on January 31. ‘Derby was put into a great rage by Aberdeen’s speech,’ says Greville, ‘and could not resist attacking me (whom he saw behind the throne). He attacked my letter in which I had pitched into the Tories for their attacks on the prince. I saw his people turn round and look towards me, but I did not care a fig, and was rather pleased to see how what I wrote had galled them and struck home.’

its readers must have expected it to say something. 'There is always great anxiety on the part of the press to get the queen's speech,' Greville remarked on February 2, 'so as to give a sketch of it the morning of the day when it is made, and those who do not get it are very jealous of those who do. There has been great bother about it on some former occasions, once particularly, because one of the Derbyites gave it to their paper, "The Morning Herald," it having been communicated in strict confidence, and according to recent custom, to the leaders of the party. The other day Aberdeen refused to give it even to "The Times," and of course to any other paper, and he begged Palmerston not to send it to "The Morning Post," which is notoriously his paper. Nevertheless the speech appeared in "The Times," and, what seemed more extraordinary, in "The Morning Advertiser," the paper which has been the fiercest opponent of the government and the most persevering and virulent of the assailants of the prince. Delane has friends in all parties, and he told me he had no less than three offers of it, and therefore he had no difficulty. But how did "The Morning Advertiser" come by it?'¹ That 'The Advertiser,' whose editor, James Grant, never dined with dukes, bishops, or privy councillors, should be as successful as he was in the scramble for early copies of the queen's speech was a real grievance to Delane.

During 1854 'The Times' quarrelled with Lord Aberdeen's government on many other matters besides the Crimean War, and it was especially spiteful against two of its members, Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston. Palmerston it continued to hate in spite of his bellicose zeal; Russell it despised on account of his alleged treachery to his colleagues and truckling to

¹ *Greville Memoirs* (Third Part), vol. i. p. 134.

the Radicals. It summed up the history of this year's parliamentary session by describing it as 'a most abortive expenditure of labour and ability,' in the course of which ministers, 'by insisting upon forcing measures on the attention of an unwilling house, exposed themselves to a series of mortifying and damaging defeats.'¹

When Palmerston formed an administration of his own in February 1855, with Russell soon to take office under him as colonial secretary, 'The Times,' though it gradually changed its tone, began by being more violent than ever. "'The Times" is going into furious opposition,' Greville wrote on the 17th, 'and Palmerston will soon find the whole press against him, except his own paper, "The Morning Post," and "The Morning Chronicle," neither of which has any circulation or any influence in the country. The whole conduct of "The Times" is a source of great vexation to me, for I am to the last degree shocked and disgusted at its conduct and the enormous mischief that it is endeavouring to do; and I have for many years had personal relations with its editor which I do not well know how to let drop, and I am at the same time not satisfied that their unbroken maintenance is consistent with the feelings I entertain, and which ought to be entertained, towards the paper.'²

Poor Greville, originally a Tory who followed Canning and, becoming a Peelite, settled down as a Palmerstonian, did not break with Delane, and after a time he read 'The Times' with satisfaction again; but he was very unhappy in this February of 1855, and, as he said, 'for the first time in his life really and seriously alarmed at the aspect of affairs.' 'The press, with "The

¹ *Times*, December 31, 1854.

² *Greville Memoirs* (Third Part), vol. i. p. 242.

Times" at its head, is striving to throw everything into confusion, and running amuck against the aristocratic element of society and of the constitution. The intolerable nonsense and the abominable falsehoods it flings out day after day, are none the less dangerous because they are nonsense and falsehoods, and backed up as they are by all the regular Radical press, they diffuse through the country a mass of inflammatory matter, the effect of which may be more serious and arrive more quickly than anybody imagines. Nothing short of some loud explosion will make the mass of people believe that any serious danger can threaten a constitution like ours, which has passed through so many trials and given so many proofs of strength and cohesion. But we have never seen such symptoms as are now visible, such a thorough confusion and political chaos, or the public mind so completely disturbed and dissatisfied and so puzzled how to arrive at any just conclusions as to the past, the present, or the future. People are furious at the untoward events in the Crimea, and cannot make out the real causes thereof, nor who is to blame, and they are provoked that they cannot find victims to wreak their resentment on. The dismissal of Aberdeen and Newcastle seems an inadequate expiation, and they want more vengeance yet: hence the cry for Roebuck's absurd committee. Then, after clamouring for Palmerston from a vague idea of his vigour, and that he would do some wonderful things, which was founded on nothing but the recollection of his former bullying despatches and blustering speeches, they are beginning to suspect him; and the whole press, as well as the malignants in the House of Commons, tell them that they have gained very little, if anything, by the change, and they are told that it is not this or that minister who can restore

our affairs, but a change in the whole system of government, and the substitution of plebeians and new men for the leaders of parties and members of aristocratic families, of whom all governments have been for the most part composed. What effect these revolutionary doctrines may have on the opinions at large remains to be seen ; but it is evident that "The Times," their great propagator, thinks them popular and generally acceptable, or they would not have plunged into that course.'¹

Greville's fears were not realised, and the hopes of the Radicals were disappointed. 'The Times' was only revolutionary within narrow limits, and the true revolutionists got but slight and temporary help from it. Such as it was, however, the help was useful ; and Greville's views about the functions of the press in relation to aristocracy and democracy, as he understood the terms and the realities represented by them, and to the new conditions of government and national well-being which were quickened by the Crimean war and its concomitants, are eminently suggestive.

'The Times' suffered by its early opposition to Lord Palmerston's government, in which Lord Clarendon was foreign secretary and Sir William Molesworth colonial secretary, until his death in October 1855, and by the coolness between Delane and Greville, with whom Henry Reeve was in close sympathy. 'Since "The Times's" breach with Lord Clarendon and Reeve,' Abraham Hayward wrote to Gladstone on January 2, 1856, 'they are no longer so well up in information as they used to be. Molesworth is another loss to them. In Scotland and the far north,' he added, 'the cheap papers have gained enormously on the London press ; but this is more owing to the telegraph

¹ *Greville Memoirs* (Third Part), vol. i. p. 243.

than to the reduction of the duty. Within a given radius round Aberdeen, for example, you get all the most interesting news twenty-four hours before the arrival of a London paper. I myself actually ceased taking in a London paper whilst I was in Scotland.'¹ Whence it appears that other changes, presently to be noted, were taking place both in the relations of 'The Times' with its London rivals, and in those of the London journals with the country at large. 'The Times' was losing its supremacy.²

¹ *Correspondence of Abraham Hayward*, vol. i. p. 270.

² Readers of Anthony Trollope's novel, *The Warden*, which was published in 1865, need hardly be reminded of its good-natured mockery of Delane as Tom Towers, and of *The Times* as *The Jupiter*.

CHAPTER XX.

‘THE TAXES ON KNOWLEDGE.’

1849—1861.

DEMAND for removal of what were conveniently, though not quite accurately, known as ‘the taxes on knowledge’ followed as a matter of course upon the yielding of parliament in 1846 to the more urgent demand for removal of the taxes on the chief article of food. The reduction of the advertisement duty in 1833 from three shillings and sixpence to eighteenpence had been accepted as an insufficient boon by newspaper proprietors and the small proportion of the community which had much occasion for advertising and at the same time considered it important that the charge for each advertisement should be two shillings less than it had hitherto been. The reduction of the newspaper stamp in 1836 from fourpence, with a discount of twenty per cent., to a penny had hardly been regarded as a boon at all by the proprietors, who were constrained to give their readers nearly all the advantage of the change, or by the great majority of people who, wanting really cheap newspapers, found that, in most cases, they still had to pay as much as fivepence or sixpence, in lieu of sevenpence, for each copy. And the lowering of the paper duty, also in 1836, though a substantial boon to both sellers and buyers, had so little appreciable effect, and worked so slowly, that it was almost lost sight of by those who

profited by it. These three fiscal changes, together and separately, were of immense benefit and contributed largely to the growth and improvement of journalism during the ensuing twenty years, of which we have seen something. Quite as much if not more of the growth and improvement was due, however, to the general spread of education and enlightenment, political and social, for which those twenty years were remarkable, and a new generation had grown up which could not be expected to be satisfied with the boons, such as they were, bestowed on a former generation. The reformers who overthrew the corn laws were not slow in recognising and encouraging its discontent.

'So long as the penny lasts,' Cobden said in 1850, with reference to the newspaper stamp, 'there can be no daily press for the middle or working class. Who below the rank of a merchant or wholesale dealer can afford to take in a daily paper at fivepence? Clearly it is beyond the reach of the mechanic and the shop-keeper. The result is that the daily press is written for its customers—the aristocracy, the millionaires, and the clubs and news-rooms. The great public cannot have its organs of the daily press, because it cannot afford to pay for them. The dissenters have no daily organ for the same reason. The governing classes will resist the removal of the penny stamp, not on account of the loss of revenue—*that* is no obstacle with a surplus of two or three millions—but because they know that the stamp makes the daily press the instrument and servant of the oligarchy.'¹

Three wars had to be waged—one for abolition of the compulsory stamp, one for repeal of the advertisement tax, and one for removal of the duty on paper—before the fiscal obstacles to 'a free press' were over-

¹ John Morley, *Life of Cobden*, ch. xxxii.

come, and, the victories being separately won, there was not complete agreement of interests among those who fought in them; but they were all parts of the same movement, and all were included in the scheme of the Association for Promoting the Repeal of the Taxes on Knowledge, which was established in 1849 with Milner Gibson for its president, Richard Moore for its hard-working chairman, and Charles Dobson Collett for its indefatigable secretary. This association grew out of a Newspaper Stamp Abolition Committee appointed by the People's Charter Union, and was thus a direct and most welcome ramification of the Chartist movement. More limited in its scope, but working in harmony with that body, was the London Committee for Obtaining the Repeal of the Duty on Advertisements, also founded in 1849, which had John Francis, the publisher of 'The Athenæum,' for its most active member, and William Ewart for its president, and which, after its first undertaking had been achieved, was reconstructed as the Newspaper Press Association for Obtaining the Repeal of the Paper Duty.

Both these organisations worked vigorously in issuing pamphlets, collecting signatures to parliament, and interviewing ministers and officials; and the whole question was raised in the House of Commons on April 16, 1850, when Milner Gibson brought forward a series of resolutions condemning the duty on paper, the compulsory newspaper stamp, the advertisement tax, and the duty on imported books. He adduced the difficulties of paper-makers like Baldwin and Crompton, and of publishers like the brothers Chambers and Charles Knight, in providing, or obtaining material for producing, such cheap literature as the public required, and he showed to what hardships regular papers like 'The Daily News' were exposed in competition with publica-

tions not ostensibly giving news, like 'Punch,' 'The Athenæum,' and 'The Builder,' which were allowed to be issued without stamps, and yet more with coarser weeklies, like 'The Town,' 'Paul Pry,' and 'Sam Sly,' which lived by libels and scurrility, having full license to comment upon facts and circulate scandalous fictions so long as they reported no actual news. He was supported by Ewart, Hume, Roebuck, and other Radicals, and also by Disraeli, who found it convenient for party purposes to give utterance to what were doubtless his real opinions on the matter. He was opposed, however, by Sir Charles Wood, the chancellor of the exchequer, who declared that it would be 'an act of political suicide' to surrender the income, amounting in 1849 to 1,329,000*l.*, derived from these several duties, and by Lord John Russell, the premier, who deprecated any change that would be likely to assimilate the English to the continental press. 'He was told,' said Lord John, 'that for a halfpenny they might obtain in Paris a newspaper full of the most infamous epigrams and the cleverest writing, together with the intelligence of the day. Schoolmasters were spread throughout France, but, unfortunately, a great part of the newspapers contained attacks not merely on the government of the day, but on all government; they were newspapers that endeavoured to make government impossible, and schoolmasters that endeavoured to make religion odious'; and he could give no countenance to plans for encouraging any such abominations as popular newspapers or popular education in England. Accordingly Milner Gibson's first motion, 'that such financial arrangements ought to be made as will enable parliament to repeal the excise duty on paper,' the only one then put to the vote, was defeated by a majority of 190 to 89. Yet more overwhelming was the majority of

208 to 39 against a motion brought forward by Ewart three weeks later, on May 7, for repealing the advertisement tax.¹

No attempt was made in 1851 to reverse these decisions of the House of Commons; but in April of that year Milner Gibson obtained the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the working of the Newspaper Stamp Act. Mowbray Morris, the manager of 'The Times'; Knight Hunt, the sub-editor of 'The Daily News'; Alexander Russel, the editor of 'The Scotsman'; Michael James Whitty, the proprietor of 'The Liverpool Journal'; and some thirty others were examined, and a valuable mass of evidence was collected. 'Your committee,' it was said in the summary of the report, 'consider it their duty to direct attention to the objections and abuses incident to the present system of newspaper stamps, arising from the difficulty of defining and determining the meaning of the term "news"; to the inequalities and evasions that it occasions in postal arrangements; to the unfair competition to which stamped newspapers are exposed with unstamped publications; to the limitation imposed by the stamp upon the circulation of the best newspapers; and to the impediments which it throws in the way of the diffusion of useful knowledge regarding current events among the poorer classes, and which species of knowledge, relating to subjects which most obviously interest them, calls out the intelligence by awakening the curiosity of those classes. How far it may be expedient that this tax should be maintained as a source of revenue, either in its present or in any modified form, your committee do not feel themselves called upon to state. Other considerations, not within their province, would enter into

¹ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates* (Third Series), vol. cx. cols. 361-422, 1238-1244.

that question. But, apart from fiscal considerations, they do not consider that news of itself is a desirable subject of taxation.'¹

The arguments and evidence of this parliamentary committee were confirmed by a trial that attracted much attention in 1851. As a supplement to his weekly 'Household Words,' which was strictly a magazine, Dickens had started a monthly 'Household Narrative of Current Events,' which, after it had been running some time, he was forbidden to issue without its being stamped as a newspaper. Dickens's publishers, Bradbury and Evans, resisted this order, and after prolonged litigation, when the case was brought before the Court of Exchequer in November, three judges declared that 'The Household Narrative' need not be stamped, while one was of an opposite opinion. Dickens accordingly persevered, and, to relieve him and others like him from uncertainty, a bill was introduced in the House of Commons on December 6, 1852, exempting all monthly publications, whether containing news or not, from the requirements of the Newspaper Stamp Act. Lord Derby's administration was, however, soon afterwards overthrown, and the project lapsed with it.²

Earlier in 1852, on April 22, Milner Gibson had quoted Dickens's case, and some more glaring instances of the arbitrariness and confusion of the law, when he again urged parliament to abolish not only the stamp duty, but also the paper duty and the advertisement tax. The vigorous debate that ensued lasted the whole evening and was concluded on May 12. Cobden spoke forcibly in condemnation of the 'taxes on knowledge.' 'The penny stamp,' he said, 'is a stamp impeding the

¹ *Reports of House of Commons Committee, 1851, vol. xvii.*

² *Hansard, vol. cxxiii. col. 1045.*

communication of modern history, for the facts of the newspapers are the facts which interest and affect and govern us all, and that stamp is the greatest obstacle to intelligence in this country.' Ewart, Hume, Ricardo, Cowan, and others argued to the same effect; but Disraeli, at that time chancellor of the exchequer and not free to speak his mind, justified the taxes as 'necessary evils'; and Gladstone, though saying that, when the proper time arrived, he should like to see the paper duty abolished, maintained that if newspapers and books were dearer than they ought to be, the blame was not so much with fiscal requirements as with the trades unionism which wickedly raised the wages of compositors and others to a level far above their deserts. If the working classes wanted cheap literature, Gladstone then thought, they had a sufficient remedy in their own hands, as they could themselves cheapen the labour by which the literature was produced. Views of that sort, and the prejudices of a House of Commons which clamoured for a war with Russia, prevailed over the common sense of the Cobdenites; and Milner Gibson's three motions in favour of repeal of the paper duty, the stamp duty, and the advertisement duty, were severally defeated by majorities of 195 to 107, 199 to 100, and 181 to 116.¹

Those figures—showing a balance of only 65 votes in favour of the advertisement tax, whereas the balances in favour of the compulsory stamp and the paper duty were 99 and 88—reasonably led the reformers to direct their attention especially, in the first instance, to the reform most likely to be carried. The agitation, kept up by meetings, deputations, and petitions, during the autumn of 1852 and the following winter, aimed chiefly at getting the advertisement tax repealed. This, more-

¹ Hansard, vol. cxx. cols. 983-1027.

over, though the least important of the three, was the reform that obtained most general support from the newspaper proprietors and the influential portion of the community. Well-to-do people cared little for the prospect of having to pay only fourpence instead of fivepence for their papers, and many of them dreaded the prospect of a really cheap press springing up and, as they thought, flooding the country with sedition ; but they could see nothing but benefit in a lowering of the charges for advertisements. And some of the high-priced journals, particularly 'The Times,' 'The Illustrated London News,' and 'The Weekly Dispatch,' encouraged them in these views. The penny stamp enabled any paper bearing it to go free by post, and its removal would therefore be no gain to country subscribers. Accordingly, though the Repeal of the Taxes on Knowledge Association abandoned no part of its programme, it consented to place the advertisement question before the others, and when Milner Gibson again brought forward his three resolutions in the House of Commons, on April 14, 1853, their order was changed.

Lord Aberdeen was then premier, with Gladstone as chancellor of the exchequer ; and the great financier declared himself unable to dispense with the 180,000*l.* or so that the advertisement tax yielded. 'The government,' he said, 'had no wish to retain, and could not retain, any restraint whatever upon the press for the sake of restraint.' 'Freedom of the press was not merely to be permitted and tolerated, but to be highly prized, for it tended to bring closer together all the national interests and to preserve the institutions of the country.' 'He should be delighted to see the day when the duty on newspapers might be removed.' But that day was not yet, and he must move the

previous question. Both Bright and Cobden spoke at length in support of the motion, and insisted that it was incumbent on a government which professed to have a regard for popular education, and which found it easy to raise money for wasteful armaments, to relieve the nation of burdens so manifestly oppressive as were these 'taxes on knowledge'; but the most effective champion of the reform, so far as the advertisement duty was concerned, was Disraeli, who asserted that, had he remained in office long enough, he should most certainly have devised a plan for meeting this reasonable demand. Disraeli's speech secured for Milner Gibson the Conservative vote, and on the first resolution, 'that the advertisement duty ought to be repealed,' the government was defeated by 200 to 169, a majority of 31. The other two motions were rejected by crushing majorities, that against the compulsory stamp by 182, and that against the paper duty by 199; but the advertisement tax was doomed. On July 1 Gladstone proposed as a compromise that, instead of abolishing the tax, it should be reduced from 1s. 6*d.* to 6*d.*, in the hope that, by the consequent lowering of the cost of advertisements, their number would be so much increased as still to yield a respectable revenue; but he was again defeated, this time by a majority of only 5 in a small house. A bill to carry out the double verdict was accordingly introduced, and the advertisement tax ceased to exist on August 4, 1853.¹

The second and more important victory followed more quickly than might have been anticipated. Dickens's triumph over the stamp commissioners as regarded his 'Household Narrative' had led to other publications of the same class, which it was the wise policy of the Taxes on Knowledge Repeal Association

¹ Hansard, vol. cxxv. cols. 1116-1187; vol. cxxviii. cols. 1091-1129.

to encourage. The secretary of that association, Collett, himself started one such, 'The Stoke-upon-Trent Narrative of Events,' and the repeated prosecutions of these sheets, as in the case of the publications of Hetherington and his associates a quarter of a century before, caused so much irritation that the authorities soon saw that it would be prudent to give way. A small measure, similar to that introduced by Disraeli in 1852, exempting all monthly publications from the requirements of the Stamp Act, was passed in August 1853, and was the prelude to a much larger concession.

On May 16, 1854, Milner Gibson's proposal for newspaper tax reform was repeated in an improved shape, so cleverly contrived that few could object to it. His motion was, 'that it is the opinion of this house that the laws in reference to the periodical press and newspaper stamp are ill defined and unequally enforced, and it appears to this house that the subject demands the early attention of parliament'; and after Bright, Hume, Ewart, and the other champions of reform had reiterated their arguments, the House of Commons adopted the resolution without a division.¹

How well prepared the country was for a change is shown by the fact that even 'The Times' now and then humoured its readers by endorsing the popular cry. 'With all our talk about knowledge, about the achievements of science, about education, schools, churches, enlightenment, and heaven knows what not,' it admitted on the morning after Milner Gibson's motion had been agreed to, 'there is something positively ridiculous in taxing that intelligence which really constitutes the great medium of a civilised country. We make a great stir about teaching everybody to read, and the state—that is, the nation—pays a quarter

¹ Hansard, vol. cxxxiii. cols. 419-460.

of a million a year in teaching children to do little more than read. Then we proceed to tax the very first thing that everybody reads. In this way the newspapers pay for the education of the country, for they find their expenses aggravated and their circulation restricted by an impost about equal to the sum spent in educating the masses. But we have several times enlarged on the absurdity of a tax which, as it is a tax on news, is a tax on knowledge, and is thus a tax on light, a tax on education, a tax on truth, a tax on public opinion, a tax on good order and good government, a tax on society, a tax on the progress of human affairs, and on the working of human institutions.' ¹

But though 'The Times' occasionally insisted on the repeal of the compulsory stamp, it generally took the opposite view, which was in accordance both with the class prejudices it supported and with its own particular interests. With a single impressed stamp for a penny, and an additional halfpenny stamp for a supplement when one was issued, 'The Times' could go post free all over the country, and even make several journeys from place to place, whereas, unless the postal arrangements were also altered, the affixed stamps necessary to cover a single postage would cost far more than the amount then charged. This, as Milner Gibson and his friends alleged, was one of the unfair advantages over other newspapers enjoyed by 'The Times,' and it was openly and unwisely adduced by them as one of their reasons for demanding a change in the law. 'The Times,' they urged, was a huge monopolist, using and abusing its authority and influence in propounding mischievous doctrines, and especially mischievous just now by its encouragement of the war fever that was afflicting the country. Therefore, anything

¹ *Times*, May 17, 1854.

that could be done to weaken and damage 'The Times' must be a public service. It was this indiscreet contention, and the rumour that it was approved by the government, which had reasons of its own for not being sorry to injure 'The Times,' that prompted Albany Fonblanque to write one of his witty articles in 'The Examiner.' 'Some years ago,' he said, 'the cry was that the power of the crown had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished. It is held now in certain quarters, high and low, that the power of the press has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished. The chief offender in this case being "The Times," it is proposed, at the particular desire of several persons in Manchester, to take measures to compass the destruction of the said "Times," or at least to cripple it very considerably. But why do this in a roundabout way, involving in the injury other properties that are not obnoxious either to Manchester or to Downing Street? Why not set about the object frankly, fairly, and directly? Why not bring in a bill of pains and penalties, setting forth the inordinateness of the power of "The Times," and that no ministry is safe under it, and enacting what may be thought calculated to render it less formidable? . . . Charles Lamb tells us of a sage people who burnt down a house whenever they wanted to roast a pig. We deprecate setting fire to the entire press for the sole and separate purpose of doing "The Times" brown. . . . Once upon a time, as Rabelais prefaces, when beasts could speak, it was thought a most meritorious action to slay a giant; and there is prevalent the same opinion now as to the giant of the press, which is deemed too big to be permitted to live, especially with the prospect of growing still bigger. There is not room enough in this broad land for both government and "The Times," and, as we must have

a government, however bad, we must not have a "Times," however good. Haman cannot suffer Mor-decai in the gate. An old fable tells us of an ill-favoured youth who was so displeased with his looking-glass that he dashed it to the ground and shivered it to a hundred fragments ; but, seeing his ugly features in each of the broken bits, he found he had made the matter a hundred times worse, and bitterly lamented that he had changed the single unflattering reflection for the multiplied. Such is the exact illustration of what the government is about in compassing small change for "The Times." To kill the giant is all very fine, but it is not always pleasant to live with dwarfs.'¹

There can be small doubt that the authorities were more inclined to abolish the compulsory stamp by jealousy of 'The Times' than by sympathy with the Manchester Radicals, but the change was inevitable after the resolution adopted by the House of Commons in May 1854, and, the Aberdeen government being defeated while Gladstone was leisurely preparing to act upon his instructions, the task was cheerfully taken in hand by Sir George Cornewall Lewis, who succeeded to the chancellorship of the exchequer under Lord Palmerston. On March 19, 1855, he introduced a bill rendering it optional for every newspaper to issue all or any of its copies either stamped or unstamped, the stamped copies being allowed the same privileges as heretofore in transit through the post ; and he pointed out that though by this change there would be a risk of the revenue suffering to the extent of 400,000*l.* a year, the amount which the stamp duty then realised, it might be expected that at least half of the newspapers published would still go through the post, and thus, even if there was no increase consequent on the

¹ *Life and Labours of Albany Fonblanque*, p. 458.

reform, would yield a revenue of not less than 200,000*l.* Almost the only objection offered to the proposal at this stage came from Gladstone and Milner Gibson, who protested against a huge paper like 'The Times,' weighing on an average six ounces, going through the post for a penny, while the charge for the postage of any printed matter not registered as a newspaper was left at twopence if its weight exceeded half an ounce. That complaint was heeded, and on June 6, 1855, nine days before the new Newspaper Stamp Bill became law, a treasury order was issued allowing four ounces of printed matter to pass through the post for a penny; and this in itself was no small boon to the public and the publishing trade, though not affecting registered newspapers.

'I am quite satisfied, from years of attention to the subject,' Bright said, in supporting Cornwall Lewis's bill, 'that there never was so large a measure involved in a small measure, so to speak, as is the case with regard to this proposition for making the press free. I am willing to rest on the verdict of the future, and I am quite convinced that five or six years will show that all the votes of parliament for educational purposes have been as mere trifles compared with the results which will flow from this measure, because, while the existing papers retain all their usefulness, it will call to their aid numbers of others not less useful, and, while we enjoy the advantage of having laid before us each morning a map of the events of the world, the same advantage will be extended to classes of society at present shut out from it.'¹

In that speech Bright referred to the 'Times' article of May 1854 which has been quoted from, but said he should not be surprised if 'The Times' of the

¹ Hansard, vol. cxxxvii. cols. 774-814.

next morning contained an article of opposite purport. His anticipation was correct. The next morning's 'Times' angrily condemned the bill as a treacherous expedient for weakening its position and encouraging cheap and dishonest rivals that would thrive by stealing the information it collected and published at great expense. 'What the London papers have to expect,' it was urged, 'is that in the metropolis, and still more in the manufacturing districts, there will be published early in the day, and circulated by private hands, a cheap class of papers giving all the news which *we* believe to constitute our principal attraction, and to obtain which we spend immense sums of money. The chancellor of the exchequer is above this vulgar appetite for news. He has no relish for an event until it has been five years in the wood, and as many in the bottle. But we must beg to assure him that the people of England are actually impatient for news, and would rather it were not even a day old. So we can easily conceive that it will answer the purpose of enterprising gentlemen to republish our news in a cheap form by ten o'clock for the metropolitan circulation, and two and four o'clock for the provincial districts.'¹

Neither all the fears of 'The Times' nor all the hopes of John Bright were destined to be realised; but mighty changes were effected by the adoption of Sir George Cornewall Lewis's Newspaper Stamp Bill. When it was brought forward for second reading on March 26, it was opposed by Disraeli, but it was approved by Bulwer Lytton and other Tories, and agreed to by a majority of 215 to 161. During its passage through committee it was sharply criticised by Lowe and other writers on 'The Times,' especially with reference to the dangers of copyright matter being

¹ *Times*, March 20, 1855.

pirated, but it was approved by both Houses of Parliament, and it became law on June 15, 1855.¹

When the Newspaper Act of 1855 came into operation 'The Times' had an average circulation of about 60,000, nearly thrice as much as that of 'The Morning Advertiser,' 'The Daily News,' 'The Morning Herald,' 'The Morning Post,' 'The Morning Chronicle,' and 'The Public Ledger,' all massed together. The new law, and the abolition of the paper duty, which occurred six years later, produced a wonderful variation in the relative positions of some of these papers, and brought fresh rivals into the field, and they caused yet greater revolution and progress in the country than in London. About the most remarkable aspects of these developments notice will be taken presently. Here it will suffice to say a little about the chief competitors of 'The Times' at the stage we have now reached.

Among these 'The Morning Advertiser' had the largest circulation, in consequence of the rule which made every member of the Licensed Victuallers' Society a subscriber to it, and which thus ensured its admission to nearly every public-house. Zealously edited at this time by James Grant, it catered well for the large class to whom it particularly addressed itself, but it was a great deal more than a mere trade journal. Though not really so Radical as 'The Daily News,' it was often bolder in its attacks on both Whig and Tory politicians, on the court and courtiers, and its style of writing was well suited to the tastes of the great mass of its readers.

In the editorship of 'The Daily News,' William

¹ Hansard, vol. cxxxvii. cols. 1109-1167, 1658-1689, 1978-2035; vol. cxxxviii. cols. 183-198, 442-454, 2003. It will be sufficient here to note that the impressed stamp, the use of which for postal purposes was optional until 1870, was then abolished, newspapers being allowed to pass through the post with a halfpenny affixed stamp.

Weir, its chief authority on railway and commercial affairs from the first, succeeded Knight Hunt in 1854, and he held the office until he died in 1858. An able and honest man, Weir was somewhat narrow in his views, and the deafness with which he was afflicted was a serious obstacle to such personal communications with others as were necessary to the proper management of a paper designed, not merely to keep abreast with Liberal opinion, but to lead and instruct it. It was well written and eminently readable, but—out of harmony, as it was bound to be, with the aristocratic politicians who held common ground whether they called themselves Whigs, Tories, Peelites, or Conservatives—it was scarcely recognised as their champion by Cobden, Bright, and the other Radicals of the Manchester school. 'The Express,' which was an afternoon version of 'The Daily News,' was not of much account, and 'The Globe,' once famous as a vigorous evening exponent of Liberalism, had lost its importance, notwithstanding the vivacity that Francis Mahony, best known as Father Prout, often imparted to its columns.

'The Morning Herald,' which soon after it became the property of Edward Baldwin in 1843 made vigorous efforts to compete with 'The Times,' establishing an independent service of foreign expresses, and in other ways indulging in a more lavish outlay than was warranted by the result, had but a few years of brilliant life. When Edward Baldwin died 'The Herald' descended to his son Charles, already proprietor of 'The Standard'; but both papers sank steadily, being, it was alleged, only maintained by a subsidy from the Emperor Napoleon III., and, nicknamed Mrs. Harris and Mrs. Gamp by 'The Times,' they rendered no service to and won no thanks from the Conservative party for which they assumed to be spokesmen, until,

on Charles Baldwin's bankruptcy, they fell into the hands of James Johnson, who, with John Maxwell as his earlier adviser and assistant, soon began to improve the property.

'The Morning Post,' of which Algernon Borthwick became manager soon after 1851, he having previously been its Paris correspondent, was also in need of mending. When 'The Morning Chronicle' was bought by the Peelites, Palmerston transferred his support to 'The Post,' and it was for some time his mouthpiece; but neither gained by the change. Speaking of the negotiations for peace with Russia after the close of the Crimean war, Greville said on December 11, 1855, 'Palmerston continues to put articles into "The Morning Post," full of arrogance and *jactance*, and calculated to raise obstacles to the peace. This is only what he did in '41, when he used to agree to certain things with his colleagues, and then put violent articles in "The Morning Chronicle," totally at variance with the views and resolutions of the cabinet.'¹

In yet worse plight was 'The Morning Chronicle' after the Peelites had abandoned their expensive and useless toy. For a few years longer, however, Serjeant Glover published 'The Evening Chronicle' as well as its parent. 'The Public Ledger' was now, as it continued to be, solely a repository of commercial announcements and advertisements.

There was thus considerable need of the reformation that was to be wrought in several of the London daily papers by the Newspaper Stamp Act of 1855 and its sequels. But even greater was the change in the weeklies. Among these 'The Illustrated London News' now stood almost if not quite in the first place as regarded circulation. In the course of twelve years

¹ *Greville Memoirs* (Third Part), vol. i. p. 303.

it had acquired an average sale of nearly 110,000, and, edited since 1848 by Charles Mackay, who combined vigorous politics and good literature with its pictures and news, it surpassed all rivals as a sixpenny paper for middle-class reading. In keen competition, the one circulating about 109,000, the other about 107,000 a week, 'The News of the World' and 'Lloyd's Weekly News,' along with 'The Weekly Times,' which sold about 75,000 copies, provided Sunday readers with as much general news, and as much Radical teaching, of various quality, as could be issued for threepence with a penny stamp. With Douglas Jerrold for editor after April 1852, and Horace Mayhew and Hepworth Dixon among its writers, 'Lloyd's' was of higher literary merit than the other two, and if it was not quite so prosperous as 'The News of the World,' this may be attributed to its conductor's good taste in not giving prominence to reports of law and police cases which were unwholesome reading. 'The Weekly Dispatch,' like 'The Examiner,' and the other older and high-priced weeklies, had already been far outstripped by cheaper rivals.

One of the arguments used against abandonment of the compulsory stamp and all cheapening of popular literature was that it would encourage the dissemination of seditious and blasphemous opinions, and tend to demoralise the community. This was an old falsehood. 'It was not,' Lord Ellenborough had said when commending the fourpenny Stamp Act in 1819, 'it was not against the respectable press that this bill was directed, but against a pauper press which, administering to the prejudices and passions of a mob, was converted to the basest purposes, which was an utter stranger to truth, and only sent forth a continual stream of malignity, its virulence and its mischief

heightening as it proceeded. If he was asked whether he would deprive the lower classes of all political information, he would say he saw no possible good to be derived by the country from having statesmen at the loom and politicians at the spinning-jenny.'

Sixteen years of further persecution, according to the policy of Lord Ellenborough and his comrades, had done something to provoke angry protest from 'the lower classes' and to educate hand-loom statesmen and spinning-jenny politicians; but the twenty years of milder treatment that ensued had done much to repair the mischief, and the chancellor of the exchequer, in introducing his Newspaper Stamp Bill in 1855, had easy work in refuting the alarmists. 'We are not,' he said, 'left merely to conjecture on indirect evidence with reference to the conduct and character of a cheap unstamped press. There is already in existence a large class of publications which, not containing news, are exempt from the stamp, and, printed at a very cheap rate, are circulated most extensively through the country. Though these publications do not contain news, yet, if it were true that the people of this country have so insatiable an appetite for immoral and licentious reading as some seem to ascribe to them, they would possess a very different character from what they actually exhibit.' He instanced, among others, 'The London Journal,' with its weekly circulation of 510,000, and 'The Family Herald,' with its weekly circulation of 240,000, in proof that, if the readers of penny publications liked to be amused as well as instructed, they did not care for vicious literature. 'These facts,' he added, 'must be considered as showing that the spontaneous taste of the lower class of readers in this country, as regards cheap unstamped periodicals, leads them to prefer a species of literature wholly innocuous in its

character, and quite free from all the dangerous elements which have been held up to our fears.' Already, he pointed out, coarse and scurrilous publications, like 'The Town' and 'The Age,' had died for lack of readers, and experience showed that 'no immoral or licentious publication has a long life or obtains an extensive popularity.' That was mainly true, and at any rate it amply justified the cheapening of literature for the people.

It was quite as much in the interests of popular literature and education in general as of newspapers, that, two of the three 'taxes on knowledge' having been repealed, the third was persistently assailed until it, too, was got rid of. This entailed a memorable struggle, about which, however, but little needs to be said here.

The agitation against the paper duty was vigorously carried on by Collett, Francis, and their fellow-workers, and in Milner Gibson and others of the Manchester school they had zealous champions in parliament. Some who should have been helpful, however, were apathetic or hostile. Cobden complained especially of 'the sentimentalists.' 'They are not to be depended on in political action,' he wrote in 1857, 'because they are not masters of their own reasoning powers. They sing songs or declaim about truth, justice, liberty, and the like ; but it is only in the same artificial spirit in which they make odes to dewdrops, daisies, &c. They are just as likely to trample on one as on the other, notwithstanding.' And he quoted Dickens, 'for ever writing of his desire to elevate the masses and to put down insolence in high places,' as an example. 'I saw a note from him in which he refused to sign a petition for the repeal of the taxes on knowledge, on the express ground that he would not promote a deluge

of printer's ink in England similar to what he had seen in America.'¹

The battle was won by stages. On June 21, 1858, Milner Gibson persuaded the House of Commons to agree without a division to an abstract resolution 'that it is the opinion of this house that the maintenance of the excise on paper as a permanent source of revenue would be impolitic.' This step gained, he thought it prudent not to court defeat that year by taking a vote on his proposed motion, 'that such financial arrangements ought to be made as will enable parliament to dispense with that tax.' On February 12, 1860, however, he and those who had worked with him during more than ten years were rewarded for their pains and patience by Gladstone's announcement, he being chancellor of the exchequer again, that he proposed to dispense with the obnoxious duty.

When the bill to that effect came on for second reading on March 12, its rejection was moved by Sir William Miles, and among those who opposed it was Lord Robert Cecil, afterwards Marquis of Salisbury. Lord Robert did not object to a regulation 'exempting from paper duty school-books which were sanctioned by the Committee of Education, in the same way that Bibles were exempted,' but he ridiculed the suggestion that a tax affecting cheap newspapers was 'a tax on knowledge.' 'Could it be maintained,' he asked, 'that a person of any education could learn anything from a penny paper? It might be said that people might learn what had been said in parliament. Well, would that contribute much to their education? They might read the foreign intelligence, of which many would understand very little, and they might see the opinions of the editor of the paper. No doubt all this was very inte-

¹ John Morley, *Life of Richard Cobden*, ch. xxiv.

resting, but it did not answer any true idea of education, or carry any real instruction to the mind. It was a prostitution of real education to talk of this tax upon the penny papers as a tax upon knowledge.' The chief ground on which other Conservative speakers based their resistance to Gladstone's proposal was that, to meet the estimated deficiency of 1,200,000*l.*, the income-tax would have to be higher by a penny than would otherwise be necessary. The bill was read a second time, however, by 245 votes against 192 ; a majority of 53 for the government. The third reading, on May 9, was obtained by a majority of only 9. On May 20, the bill was defeated by 193 votes to 104 in the House of Lords.

The turmoil that ensued furnished material for an important chapter in constitutional history. 'It entailed,' said Gladstone, 'the severest parliamentary struggle in which I have ever been engaged.'¹ But the satisfactory issue of this struggle was the adoption of such a plan for carrying out the reform by the House of Commons that the House of Lords could not again thwart it. The paper duty was abolished on June 12, and the new rule came into operation on October 1, 1861.

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, vol. vii. p. 374.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE MODERN REVOLUTION.

1855—1861.

THE six years between the repeal of the Newspaper Stamp Act and the surrender of the paper duty were years of stupendous change in the conditions of journalism. Those fiscal reforms were themselves merely incidents in the revolution, as much consequences of an overwhelming movement already started as causes of further progress ; but if they were inevitable, they were also most beneficial.

‘The Saturday Review,’ commenced on November 3, 1855, was not the earliest, or, as a newspaper, the most important of the ventures of this revolutionary period, but it represented more clearly than any of the others some of the fresh forces that were at work. Started chiefly at the expense of A. J. B. Beresford Hope, and edited by John Douglas Cook, immediately after the Peelites, with him for newspaper trumpeter, had abandoned a six years’ effort to make ‘The Morning Chronicle’ an effective organ of their opinions, it became, within narrower limits and in lines of its own, a more remarkable pioneer of modern developments in journalism. ‘Their immediate motive in coming before the public,’ the projectors announced, ‘is furnished by the impetus given to periodical literature by the repeal of the Newspaper Stamp Act. The press has, by the late change in

the law, acquired freedom rather than cheapness, and of the benefits of this change the writers and proprietors of "The Saturday Review" desire to avail themselves.' Of its general plans and achievements something will be said presently. The chief thing to be noted here is that, as was proper to a continuator of 'The Morning Chronicle,' it made it one of its special duties to oppose 'The Times' on political grounds, and to overthrow, if it could, what it regarded as the monstrous monopoly of the overweening tyrant of Printing House Square.

The keynote was struck in a vigorous but extravagant article on 'Our Newspaper Institutions' in its first number. 'No apology is necessary,' it was here said, 'for assuming that this country is ruled by "The Times."' We all know it, or, if we do not know it, we ought to know it. It is high time we began to realise the magnificent spectacle afforded by British freedom—thirty millions of cives Romani governed despotically by a newspaper! 'There is very little use in inquiring how this state of things came about,' it was added. 'Probably the causes of which it is the result have been multifarious and contradictory. Our slavery to habit and our love of change—our worship of success and our sympathy with unprotected endeavour—our delight in hearing our own age extolled with fulsome adulation, and our fancy for reading contemporary history with a margin of murmurs and a glossary of grumbling—the former dearness of newspapers and advertisements, and their present cheapness—the independence of "The Times" and its immorality—its adequacy to great questions, and its industry in hunting out infinitely small ones—the power and humour which it occasionally displays, the sham wit and counterfeit energy which it often puts upon us—each of these has no doubt distinctly assisted in procuring for it some class

of readers, or contributes sensibly to its existing influence.' That influence 'The Saturday Review' proposed to undermine. 'We suggest,' it said, among other things, 'that the existing despotism may be mitigated by the exercise of common sense and ordinary perspicacity. We say to a confiding public, Do your best to resolve the "we" into "I." Because William Jones addresses you on Monday with vigorous logic and persuasive rhetoric, do not take the conclusions of John Smith for granted because they happen to be printed on Tuesday in the same place. Reflect that both William Jones and John Smith are gentlemen writing three times a week, be there matter or no matter, be there straw for the bricks or none.'¹

'The Saturday Review,' proposing to give sixteen pages of original writing and advertisements every week for fivepence, or on a stamped copy for sixpence, was only a critic, not a rival, of 'The Times' and the other daily papers. The first of the new rivals was 'The Daily Telegraph and Courier,' which had made its appearance as a twopenny four-page sheet on June 29, 1855, a fortnight after the passing of the Newspaper Stamp Act. 'The former name,' it was said, 'is, we trust, appropriate, from the sources of our special information, and the latter as an evidence of our means of dissemination and circulation.'²

Both halves of the title were borrowed. 'The Courier,' once famous and influential as an evening journal, had died ingloriously, not long before, after half a century's existence. A 'Railway Telegraph' had had very brief life in 1846 as one of the stock-jobbing papers, then plentiful, before the collapse of the railway mania; and Herbert Ingram, elated by the

¹ *Saturday Review*, November 3, 1855.

² *Daily Telegraph*, June 29, 1855.

success of 'The Illustrated London News,' had started a 'London Telegraph' on February 1, 1848. This latter was a bold and interesting experiment. In 'The London Telegraph' Ingram proposed to give for threepence as much news as the other journals supplied for fivepence. The paper was to be published at noon, so as to furnish later intelligence than the morning journals provided, yet to be in time for delivery all over London and in the suburbs early in the afternoon. It was also to have a *feuilleton*, after the French example, and it made a good beginning in this line with 'The Pottleton Legacy,' by Albert Smith. Its editor was Thomas Hodgskin, an authority on economical and commercial affairs, and Charles Mackay wrote on foreign politics. But it was an unprofitable speculation. Reduced in size on May 15, its last number, containing the last chapter of 'The Pottleton Legacy,' was printed on July 8.¹

'The Daily Telegraph and Courier' threatened to be as short-lived as 'The London Telegraph.' As a cheaper paper than any of the other dailies, it caused some sensation, but Colonel Sleigh, who projected it, had not sufficient capital for the enterprise, and neither by business energy nor, though Thornton Hunt was its editor, by literary merit, was it able to compete successfully with its rivals, which had now reduced their price to fourpence for unstamped copies. Sleigh had promised that the advertisement columns should 'in no

¹ 'Mr. Hodgskin,' says Dr. Mackay, 'reported that the disappointed proprietor, in his unreasonable and unreasoning wrath at the failure, accused him of being the cause of it, from his constant use of the word "bureaucracy," which, Mr. Ingram said, had occurred at least ten times in one week in the leading articles. "Bureaucracy! bureaucracy!" he exclaimed in irate terms, "such a word is enough to damn any newspaper, and it has damned *The Telegraph*.'"—*Through the Long Day*, vol. i. p. 351.

case exceed the first page,' or that, if they did, a second sheet of four pages should be issued ; but he never had occasion to keep the promise. Advertisers refused to patronise the new journal, and a day's income from this source was sometimes no more than ten or fifteen shillings. Sleigh accordingly fell heavily into debt, and especially with the printer, Joseph Moses Levy, who was at that time the proprietor of 'The Sunday Times,' a formidable competitor, among the high-priced weeklies, of 'The Weekly Dispatch.' In redemption of his debt, and to save the paper from ruin, Levy took it into his own hands, and shortly afterwards, on September 17, 1855, it was issued as the first of the penny daily papers.

In the opening article of the first number of 'The Daily Telegraph and Courier,' the writer had spoken of the power already achieved by the press, and the 'conquests' it had already obtained, as 'the tacit acknowledgment of the superiority of its mental advocacy of right, in contradistinction to the dreaded dictation of an armed and licentious mob.' These triumphs, he declared, 'instead of rendering the press tyrannical, immoral, and an instrument to be feared, have made it, under a constitutional monarchy, the safeguard of the throne, the improver of morality, and the guardian of the subject. Let not, then, the new era of journalism which we this day inaugurate in the metropolis of the world be viewed in any other light than as an additional monitor to the people, and a loyal champion of the sovereign and the constitution.'¹ And in the sixty-ninth number, the first offered for a penny, 'The Daily Telegraph' claimed to be 'a newspaper compiled with a care which places it in the hamlet, and secures its perusal in the palace.'²

¹ *Daily Telegraph*, June 29, 1855.

² *Ibid.*, September 17, 1855.

For his boldness, regarded by others as madness, in proposing to issue a morning journal, saddled with all the heavy expenses incident to the collection of news at first hand, besides all the original writing, at the low price of a penny, Levy was in time rewarded. He was able to boast that, in January 1856, 'The Daily Telegraph and Courier' had achieved an average circulation of 27,000 a day ;¹ and on March 17 the sheet was enlarged by nearly half its original size. 'Our success has been complete,' it was then said, 'although we have had combined against us the entire metropolitan, and a large section of the provincial press.' On the following September 6 the size was reduced ; but 'The Daily Telegraph'—dropping from its title the 'Courier,' which had previously been printed in reduced type, on October 28—appeared as an eight-page sheet on March 29, 1858. By that time its prosperity had been assured, and it had some ground for asserting that it was 'without precedent or parallel,' seeing that, with special correspondents in France, Prussia, Russia, India, and Canada, it gave nearly as much, and quite as varied reading, as any of its high-priced compeers, or the most enterprising of the cheap rivals that, following its example, had entered the field.

Of those rivals there were then three. 'The Morning News,' though first to appear, was of small account. Commenced on March 3, 1856, it was a poor compilation from 'The Morning Chronicle,' issued under the same reckless and incapable management, and, with or without design, calculated rather to prejudice the public against the innovation of penny newspapers than to

¹ It may be well to remind the reader that, with the cessation of the compulsory stamp, the published stamp returns ceased to be of any value as informants of the circulation of the various newspapers, as only so many were stamped as were intended to pass through the post.

answer any useful purpose. Its last number was published on December 31, 1858, with a promise, which was not kept, that a new series, giving eight instead of four pages, and edited by Henry Mayhew, would be begun in January. The two others were more important experiments in penny journalism.

One was a double event. On March 17, 1856, was commenced 'The Morning Star' with 'The Evening Star' as its afternoon pendant. These estimable and heroic advocates and exponents of the policy of the Manchester school, which had taken a lead in procuring the Newspaper Stamp Act, were a tardy effort to make practical use of the reform; and 'The Daily Telegraph' had been allowed to acquire a firm hold on popular favour before the more earnest Radicalism of Cobden and Bright had a mouthpiece in the press. Hesitation about interfering with 'The Daily News,' which had emanated from the same school ten years before, seems to have caused some delay, and further delay was caused by the difficulty in raising sufficient funds for the venture. A capital of about 80,000*l.* was at length raised, however, Cobden contributing 250*l.*, and 4,500*l.* coming from his immediate friends. John Bright's brother-in-law, Samuel Lucas—not to be confounded with another Samuel Lucas, who edited Disraeli's weekly organ, 'The Press,' and was afterwards connected with 'The Times'—was the first editor, and under him was an efficient staff. The plan, at starting, was to give news rather than comments. There was but one leading article in each number, and not much other original writing. 'Facts,' it was announced, 'will never be dealt with in these papers'—the programme being for 'The Evening' as well as for 'The Morning Star'—for party or personal objects. Believing that the public are, ordinarily, able to supply their own com-

ments, these papers will report occurrences without lengthened observations.' The promise was made that they should 'pander to no popular passions,' and would 'strive to be essentially household papers.' 'They will strive,' it was added, 'to enlist those kindlier sympathies and more graceful social sentiments which contribute to the happiness of home. Every useful measure of a philanthropic tendency will receive ardent advocacy, and it will be a leading object of these journals to promote those principles which most contribute to the permanency of peace, and to the consequent increase of the prosperity as well of nations as of families.'¹ Unfortunately those aims were too refined and exalted for readers who enjoyed the roarings of 'the young lions of "The Telegraph,"' and the undeserved opprobrium that fell upon the members of the Manchester school during and after the Crimean war affected the commercial prospects of 'The Morning Star.' Even 'The Saturday Review,' however, welcomed the newcomer, and commended it for being free alike from 'the vulgarity of "The Daily News"' and the imbecility of "The Morning Herald."'²

'The Morning Herald,' and also its evening colleague, 'The Standard,' had sunk very low before the bankruptcy of Charles Baldwin, the proprietor of both papers, in the summer of 1857, when they were bought, plant and everything, by James Johnson for, it is said, 16,500*l*.³ 'The Standard,' however, was still the best circulated and the most authoritative of the afternoon papers. 'There is no subject, celestial or terrestrial,' it was said of it in 'The Saturday Review,' 'on which it has not a fixed, familiar opinion, which it is not ready to state on

¹ *Morning Star*, March 17, 1856.

² *Saturday Review*, March 22, 1856.

³ James Grant, *Newspaper Press*, vol. ii. p. 111.

oath, and which no change of circumstances can alter. This is the secret of its success ; its opinions are cast in iron, and its language possesses a sort of amiable coarseness which can present those opinions in a hundred forms.’¹ When Johnson became its owner he lost no time in improving ‘The Standard,’ issuing it for the first time as a morning instead of as an evening paper on June 29, 1857, reducing its price to twopence and doubling its size to eight large pages ; but, for the benefit of aristocratic readers, not only continuing ‘The Morning Herald,’ with all its silliness, as a four-penny paper, without the stamp, but also starting a high-priced ‘Evening Herald.’

In ‘The Standard,’ besides all the news, a novel, ‘Leonard Harlowe, or the Game of Life,’ by Dr. William Russell, was now given, and, supplying twice as much matter for twopence as either ‘The Daily Telegraph’ or ‘The Morning Star’ provided for a penny, it was a dangerous competitor. The competition was keener after February 4, 1858, when the price was reduced to a penny. ‘When in 1857 the proprietorship changed,’ it was then announced, ‘it was determined that a step should be taken in advance in every department of the journal. All the truly able and efficient portion of the staff were retained ; fresh blood from the best tried sources was introduced ; the size of the paper was doubled ; the expression of opinion was widened from narrow sectarian views to the comprehensive judgment and reason of unbiassed Englishmen, in order that the journal might find an acceptable place in every family.’ ‘The politics of “The Standard,”’ it was added, ‘are those of the age—enlightened amelioration and progress. Our religious principles are staunch Protestantism, without narrow sectarian bigotry or polemical zeal.

¹ *Saturday Review*, February 2, 1856.

Bound to no party, our only object and aim are to make this journal the earnest and honest representative and exponent of true English spirit, interests, prosperity, and freedom ; striving manfully for the permanent advance and greatness of the entire British empire.' ¹

It was this cheapening of 'The Standard' that led to the doubling in size of 'The Daily Telegraph' seven weeks later. The rivalry that within two years of the passing of the Newspaper Stamp Act had been established among London penny papers, and between them and their high-priced contemporaries, was liveliest in respect of these two—'The Standard,' which professed moderate and progressive Conservatism, and 'The Telegraph,' which was boldly Radical in some ways, but had no sympathy with the Manchester school ; and it was hotly maintained during the years before and after the abolishing of the paper duty, which was of immense advantage to both the penny combatants and, in less degree, to nearly all the others.² 'The Morning Star,' able, earnest, and generous, enforcing unpopular opinions, and appealing to a limited class of readers, was a competitor to be sneered at by those who chose, but hardly to be feared.

'The Standard,' having its long-established traditions, which merely needed to be improved upon, and a good staff of writers, to be added to on occasion, was in somewhat different case from 'The Telegraph,' for which the whole machinery of a newspaper office, human and other, had to be rapidly brought together. Under Thornton Hunt's not too energetic editorship and afterwards, capable writers and assistants had to be

¹ *Standard*, February 4, 1858.

² By the removal of the paper duty, it is said, *The Daily Telegraph* saved 12,000*l.* a year.

enlisted. One of the first was George Augustus Sala, not long before one of Dickens's pupils on 'Household Words.' Another was Edwin Arnold, who in 1861 resigned the principalship of the Sanskrit College at Poona to become a leader writer for 'The Telegraph,' and who at once made his mark by his articles on Indian subjects. Another was John Merry Le Sage, who, formerly a reporter for 'The Torquay Directory,' joined the London paper at about the same time.¹ An active worker with Levy from the first, moreover, was his son, who took the name of Lawson on the death of his uncle, Lionel Lawson. Edward Lawson was writing dramatic criticisms and other articles for 'The Telegraph' in 1857.²

By the new and vigorous competition to which they were exposed the high-priced papers missed much of the advantage they would otherwise have gained from the removal of 'the taxes on knowledge,' and at least two of them suffered considerably. 'The Morning Herald,' as we have seen, was only kept alive as an adjunct of 'The Standard,' and it dropped out of existence in 1869. 'The Morning Chronicle' died before that, in 1862. 'The Daily News' fared better, having a steady-going editor, after William Weir's death, in Thomas Walker, and, the more Radical connection of the sometime Radical organ having gone over to 'The Morning Star,' it satisfied the majority of the Liberal party in its languid adhesion to Lord John Russell and his Whig and Peelite allies. 'The Morning Advertiser' had a more prosperous though less dignified life, continuing to combine a certain form of violent Liberalism with its vigour as a trade organ, the licensed victuallers being, as a body, more Liberal than Conser-

¹ William Hunt, *Then and Now*, p. 65.

² Edmund Yates, *Recollections and Experiences*, vol. i. p. 297.

vative until the legislative interference with their trade which culminated in the Licensing Act of 1868 turned the current of their politics. Apart from 'The Times,' the only other political daily paper was 'The Morning Post'; and 'The Post' obtained a new lease of life from reforms that on principle it opposed.

'The Morning Post' now stood alone as the aristocratic paper, and under the skilful management of its young editor, Algernon Borthwick, it was much more than a channel for 'fashionable intelligence.' As the champion and spokesman of Lord Palmerston, who found it convenient to have a newspaper organ of his own, agreeing with him on matters about which he was sometimes at variance with the colleagues over whom he presided, and as Palmerston's ally or mouthpiece in zealous support of the policy of Napoleon III., it acquired a unique position among English journals. 'Intelligence arrived yesterday,' Greville wrote on January 1, 1856, 'that Esterhazy had presented the Austrian proposal to Nesselrode on the 28th, who had received it in profound silence. Yesterday morning "The Morning Post," in communicating this fact, put forth an article indecently violent and menacing against Prussia; and, as it contained a statement of what the Emperor Napoleon had said to Baron Seebach, which was exactly what Persigny had told Clarendon, this alone would prove, if any proof were required, that the article was inserted either by Palmerston or by Persigny. "The Morning Post" derives its only importance from being the gazette of Palmerston or of the French government, and it is not very easy to determine which of the two is guilty of this article.' And on the next day Greville added, 'The speech which Louis Napoleon addressed to the imperial guard the day before yesterday, when they marched into Paris in triumph, gives

reason for suspecting that the manifesto against Prussia in "The Morning Post" was French, for there is no small correspondence between the speech and the article.'¹ Such use of 'The Morning Post' for state purposes—and it often happened—necessarily helped the circulation of the paper.

'The Times' also, of course, profited much by the special information it obtained from official sources. Though the fiscal reforms were of great benefit to it, and though its circulation increased every year and its income from advertisements was yet more augmented, its political influence was being as much impaired by the advent of new rivals and the growth of old ones as the Cobdenites or the critics of 'The Saturday Review' could hope for; but it was still, and was long to continue, a great authority, courted and feared by strong governments, and meekly or sullenly accepted as an infallible instructor by a large section of the public. Its old opposition to Lord Palmerston had nearly passed away, and during Palmerston's two premierships, extending with a brief interruption from 1855 to 1865, it gave him almost uniform support.

Towards Napoleon III. 'The Times' was less friendly, and in 1858, when Lord Derby was in office, he had to ask Greville to use his influence with Delane 'to get them to abstain from writing any more irritating articles about France,' because, as Lord Derby averred, 'these articles provoked the French to madness,' at a time when 'nothing but the utmost care and moderation on both sides enabled the two governments to go on in harmony.'² But Greville tells a curious story showing how even the French emperor, when it suited him, made use of 'The Times.' 'Persigny called

¹ *Greville Memoirs* (Third Part), vol. ii. pp. 1, 2.

² *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 179.

on Lord John one day,' we read, 'and told him he was come in strict confidence to show him the letter which the emperor had written to the king of Sardinia, but which he must not mention even to his colleagues, except of course to Palmerston. Lord John promised he would not, and a day or two after he read the letter in "The Times." He sent for Persigny and asked for an explanation. Persigny said he could not explain it, but would write to Walewski. John Russell also wrote to Cowley, who spoke to Walewski about it. Walewski declared he could not account for it, and that it must have been sent from Turin, and he would write to that court to complain of the indiscretion and would also speak to the emperor. He went to the emperor, told him what had passed, and showed him what he proposed to write to Turin, when the emperor said, "No, don't write at all; take no notice of the publication. The fact is, I sent the letter myself to 'The Times' ' correspondent!" A most extraordinary proceeding,' Greville adds, 'and showing the extreme difficulty of all diplomatic dealing between the two governments. The emperor is by way of being indignant with "The Times," and never fails to pour out abuse of the paper to whomever he converses with. He did so to Cobden, for instance, to whom he gave an audience at Paris. But who can tell whether this is not a pretence and a deceit, and whether he may not all the time have a secret understanding with "The Times"?'¹

The political connections of 'The Times' gave it an immense advantage over all the other newspapers. Its ample resources, moreover, enabled it to spend a great deal more money than any other journal had at command in paying for good work, whether done in London

¹ *Greville Memoirs* (Third Part), vol. ii. pp. 273, 274.

or elsewhere. Abraham Hayward and Vernon Harcourt were two old writers on 'The Morning Chronicle' who were glad to contribute to 'The Times,' while, at the same time, they were writing for its angry critic, 'The Saturday Review'; and scores of other able men, professed journalists and competent amateurs, were on its staff. The enterprise that had been so useful in procuring William Howard Russell's letters concerning the Crimean War was continued on all occasions, and Russell himself was employed as a special correspondent respecting grand spectacles like the coronation of the Tzar Nicholas at Moscow in 1856, and momentous catastrophes like the Indian Mutiny. It was George Wingrove Cooke who acted as special correspondent for 'The Times' during the Chinese War of 1857, the account of which was reprinted under the title of 'China and Lower Bengal;' another work, 'Conquest and Civilisation in Northern Africa,' being made up of letters written by him during a mission to Algeria. The example set by 'The Times' in such developments of journalistic work as these was already being freely followed by other papers; but they had not yet contrived to vie with it successfully.

All these and all such extensions of newspaper enterprise were concurrent with, and partly incidental to, the abolition of 'the taxes on knowledge'; and nearly every newspaper profited by the change, though not in equal measure, and the public profited yet more. In the weekly press, moreover, the revolution brought about was in some respects quite as remarkable as in the daily press.

'The weekly newspaper, whether sectional or general,' as it was said in the preliminary announcement of 'The Saturday Review,' 'aims at giving a digest of all the news of the week, together with comments in the shape

of leading articles which, from the nature of the case, must be few in number, and either partial or perfunctory in scope. What "The Saturday Review" proposes is to make its speciality consist in leading articles and other original matter.' As this writing could be done leisurely during the week, it undertook to offer 'more measured statements and more deliberate thought' than could be looked for in the work done hastily for the daily papers, and at the same time it pointed out that 'its comparative frequency of publication will enable it to occupy a position in the way of direct and immediate usefulness which periodicals published at the rare intervals of one month or three months necessarily fail to maintain.' Most of its writers, it was added, 'who are known to each other, and none of whom are unpractised in periodical literature, have been thrown together by affinities naturally arising from common habits of thought, education, reflection, and social views'; and they proposed 'to address themselves to the educated mind of the country, and to serious, thoughtful men of all schools, classes, and principles, not so much in the spirit of party as in the more philosophical attitude of mutual counsel and friendly conflict of opinions.' 'In politics,' it was further said, "'The Saturday Review" is independent both of individual statesmen and of worn-out political sections; in literature, science, and art, its conductors are entirely free from the influence or dictation of pecuniary or any other connections with trade, party, clique, or section.' And, in token of their independence, it was notified that 'the conductors decline to receive books, prints, &c., gratuitously for review,' and 'will provide for themselves the works which they may select for criticism.'¹

There was some arrogance, or bumptiousness, in

¹ *Saturday Review*, November 3, 1855.

these declarations, and all the promises were not kept ; but the first number of ' The Saturday Review,' giving six articles on political or other concerns of the day, three short essays of a more miscellaneous sort, and five reviews of books, was a striking production, and the plan was fairly well adhered to after it was found expedient, at the end of two years, to increase the size of the paper so as to give, in about twenty pages, about twenty articles of various sorts every week, the price being raised from fivepence to sixpence. There was no lack of energy in its management, its chief originator, A. J. B. Beresford Hope, being also one of its contributors under its able editor ; and among other contributors, besides Abraham Hayward and Vernon Harcourt, being Edward Alfred Freeman, George Smythe, who died as Lord Strangford, and Lord Robert Cecil, who became Lord Salisbury ; to whom were added, somewhat later, James Fitzjames Stephen, Henry Maine, John Morley, and many more. No collection of writing so thoughtful, vigorous, or diversified, was at that time given in any other weekly paper, and ' The Saturday Review,' speedily winning favour among a large body of readers, not only exerted a very considerable influence upon them, and, through them, upon a much larger circle, but also, coinciding with other influences, had very marked effect upon weekly journalism as a whole.

' The Examiner,' nearly half a century before, had begun as bravely, and, to say the least, with as high purpose, as ' The Saturday Review ;' but ' The Examiner' had scarcely moved with the times. Leigh Hunt had done splendid work in it, excellent on political and on literary grounds, during more than one decade ; and Albany Fonblanque, during much more than another decade, had revived and carried on that work, on somewhat different lines, but with equal earnestness

and honesty, and more pungent wit. Fonblanque, however, had been made chief of the statistical department of the Board of Trade by Lord John Russell in 1849, and, though still writing often for 'The Examiner' with much of his old fire, was to some extent associated with one of the 'worn-out political sections' at which 'The Saturday Review' sneered; and John Forster, his successor in the editorship, was, with all his literary tastes and political sympathies, a man of uncertain mood. Neither he nor Fonblanque was inclined to face the opposition of 'The Saturday Review' by reconstructing 'The Examiner' as an outspoken and comprehensive exponent of later Radicalism. Though Forster had a staff of brilliant and trenchant writers under him, including Eyre Evans Crowe, Edwin Chadwick, Torrens McCullagh, and Henry Morley, who before long took Forster's place as editor, there was small room for their work in the old-fashioned sheet, of which only two or three pages were spared for original articles, and the rest was occupied by Dudley Costello, the sub-editor, with extracts of news from the daily papers. 'The Examiner' was allowed to fall behind in the race for which new conditions were prescribed by 'The Saturday Review.'

'The Spectator' was more enterprising. From its commencement, Rintoul had provided in it so much space for original writing, and had been so careful as to the selection and condensation of news, that its assimilation to 'The Saturday Review,' in outward form and general scope, was comparatively easy. The paper had of necessity aged somewhat with the man during the thirty years of his editorship and ownership; but after his death, on April 22, 1858,¹ 'The Spectator' fortunately passed into hands well able to manage it.

¹ *Spectator*, May 1, 1858.

Meredith Townsend brought to his task considerable experience as a travelled politician and business aptitude controlled by high principle, and when he was joined by Richard Holt Hutton, a deep thinker and polished writer, an altogether suitable partnership was established for making 'The Spectator' a formidable critic and an active guide of public opinion. Narrower in its range than 'The Saturday Review,' and more systematic in its aims, it was a consistent teacher and advocate of views in politics, religion, philosophy, and literature not more different than the lapse of a generation almost necessitated from the views and aims which Rintoul had propounded as the friend and disciple of men like George Grote and Joseph Hume.

The influence of 'The Saturday Review' was shown in many other weekly papers which need here be only named, or not even named. Such papers as 'The Guardian' and 'The Athenæum' were improved in quality, and thereby both the proprietors and the public gained. Others, like 'The Leader,' started by George Henry Lewes in 1849,¹ and 'The Press,' favoured by Benjamin Disraeli, were hastened towards decay and death. Others, like 'The London Review,' commenced by Charles Mackay in 1860,² with Lawrence Oliphant for one of his partners, attempted to vie with the already mighty autocrat of Southampton Street, and soon found their efforts futile.

The passing of the Newspaper Stamp Act, and the

¹ In 1859, 'talking of *The Leader* to Lewes, Carlyle asked, "When will those papers on Positivism come to an end?" "I can assure you they are making a great impression at Oxford," says Lewes. "Ah! I never look at them; it's so much blank paper to me. I looked into Comte once; found him to be one of those men who go up in a balloon and take a lighted candle to look at the stars."—*Anne Gilchrist: her Life and Writings*, p. 72.

² Mackay, *Through the Long Day*, vol. ii. pp. 201-212.

prospect of a speedy removal of the paper duty, led to a great many fresh experiments in weekly journalism which, if most of them were disastrous so far as the projectors were concerned, encouraged or compelled by their competition much advance in those journals which were strong enough to live and thrive. So it was especially in the case of 'The Illustrated London News,' to which, on account both of its large size and of its large circulation, the withdrawal of the fiscal burdens was of exceptional advantage. In opposition to it were started 'The Pictorial Times,' 'Pen and Pencil,' 'The Coloured News,' and several more, besides 'The Illustrated Times'; but of these only the last-named, swallowing up some of the others, obtained any hold on the public.

'The Illustrated Times' was begun on June 9, 1855, six days before the Newspaper Stamp Bill became law, with David Bogue for its proprietor and Henry Vizetelly for its editor; and was interesting, not only on account of its clever pictures, but also because in it what was almost a new line of journalism was opened up by a young and afterwards famous journalist. With the third number Edmund Yates commenced a weekly article entitled 'The Lounger at the Clubs.' 'For six or seven years,' he says, 'I kept up a continuous comment on the social, literary, and dramatic events of the day, and it was, I believe, Mr. Vizetelly's opinion that my flippant nonsense did as much for the paper as the deeper and drier wisdom of the day.' Yates was in good company. 'Many of the rising men of the day,' he adds, 'George Sala, Robert Brough, James Hannay, Frederick Greenwood, Sutherland Edwards, Augustus Mayhew, Edward Draper, were on the staff of the little paper, which did well—so well that the proprietor of its big predecessor found it necessary to purchase

it, and thenceforward let it fly with partially clipped wings.' ¹

The weekly papers that gave pictures, such as 'The Illustrated London News' and its rivals, the weekly papers that gave jokes, among which 'Punch' had no rival worth mentioning, and some others with special aims—among which 'The Field,' started in 1853 by Horace Cox, 'The City Press,' started in 1857, 'The Army and Navy Gazette,' projected by William Howard Russell, and 'The National Reformer,' projected by Charles Bradlaugh, both in 1860, were particularly noteworthy in their several departments—held intermediate place between the papers claiming to be solely critical, with 'The Saturday Review' now at their head, and the papers intended to be chiefly if not exclusively newspapers, according to the narrower meaning of the word. Among these latter the effects of the fiscal reforms of the period we are now considering were very remarkable. Hardly any paper of the least importance, except those which were merely advertisement sheets or strictly trade organs, has, of course, been published during the last two centuries, which has offered nothing but news to its readers, and even the humblest journals have done something to influence public or local opinion, not only by their bare statement of facts, but by their modes of stating them, and by their few or many comments thereon. Even the humblest, too, were influenced, and more or less improved, by the growing demand for instruction which caused the abolition of 'the taxes on knowledge,' and by such example as was set by 'The Saturday Review.' More comment or criticism than heretofore was given, or attempted, along with the bald recital of events, in nearly every newspaper. A great cleavage began, how-

¹ Yates, *Recollections and Experiences*, vol. i. p. 278.

ever, or was then first apparent, about the middle of the nineteenth century, and it was very distinct before the day when the paper duty was done away with.

The lowering of the cost of production, partly due to legislative action, and partly to other causes which will presently be referred to, and also the increasing demand of the public for newspapers along with other sorts of literature, brought great advantage to almost all newspapers. With its expenses lowered, even if its circulation was not increased, every journal not driven out of the field by the quickening competition, was a better commercial property after 1855, and yet more after 1861, than it had been before ; and many proprietors were satisfied with this. But the more intelligent portion of the public were not satisfied. If our grandfathers and great-grandfathers were perforce content to pay fivepence or sixpence, or it might be eightpence or tenpence, for a small news sheet, of which, say, half was actual news, one fourth advertisements, and the remaining fourth more or less forcible original writing, our fathers had some reason for grumbling if the same sort of provision, or even a little more, on a larger sheet, but in the same proportion, was offered to them with a reduction of only a penny or so on the old price. Cheap papers were wanted ; and, especially as the want was met by enterprising caterers, the caterers without enterprise, though they might not be ruined, and might even find their profits somewhat enhanced, were at a disadvantage in comparison with their bolder rivals. Hence we find that papers of great repute in former days, like 'The Examiner' and 'The Weekly Dispatch,' running in the old grooves, and charging fivepence for the unstamped sheet instead of sixpence for the stamped sheet, were eclipsed by papers like 'Lloyd's Newspaper,' which gave nearly as much news and comments for a

penny. Readers who could afford to pay fivepence or sixpence for a weekly paper preferred, especially as they could now get news from the daily penny papers, to buy 'The Saturday Review' or 'The Spectator,' with its ample supply of original writing. Those whose means were scantier, or who knew the value of money, bought 'Lloyd's.'

The circulation of 'Lloyd's Newspaper' exceeded 100,000 for the week in which it reported the death and funeral of the Duke of Wellington, and in 1853, when it was ten years old, its average sale was about 90,000. The abolition of the advertisement tax in that year nearly doubled its receipts from advertisers, and enabled its energetic proprietor to improve the quality of his paper. Of much greater importance, however, was the abolition of the compulsory stamp which reduced the price for all who did not receive their copies by post—these, in the case of publications like 'Lloyd's,' being the great majority of customers—from threepence to twopence. The sale increased so rapidly that it amounted to 170,000 in September 1861, when, anticipating by a few weeks the abolition of the paper duty, Lloyd reduced the price to a penny. This bold step involved serious risk and much present loss of money, and, as it also halved the profits of the newsvendors on each copy they sold, it was angrily condemned by them. It was persisted in, however, and as a consequence the circulation had risen to nearly 350,000 in 1863, a number which was added to in nearly every succeeding year.

It was to meet this unparalleled demand that in 1855 Lloyd opened negotiations with Hoe & Company, the inventors of rotary printing machines in New York, and he was the first in England to make use of their appliances for rapid printing, these being improved and

adapted to meet the special requirements of the Salisbury Court establishment. The Walter press, introduced in 'The Times' office in 1856, was suggested by Lloyd's innovation, and to his eager adoption of other expedients for facilitating the work of printing and distributing newspapers by hundreds of thousands, his rivals and compeers are largely indebted. If the process of type-setting still in vogue shows little advance on the arrangements of our ancestors, all its sequels, as in stereotyping, 'machining,' counting and folding the copies issued from the press, and so forth, have been elaborated and modified to a wonderful extent in answer to the demand for prompt supply of newspapers in quantities and varieties that our ancestors never dreamt of.

These mechanical appliances were the direct outcome of the growth in the newspaper trade. Others, quite as helpful, were the causes rather than the consequences of further growth. The construction of railways was of immense service alike in the collection and in the distribution both of news and of newspapers. The electric telegraph proved yet more useful as an agent for collecting and distributing news, though newspapers could not be conveyed by it. The changes thus brought about, or conduced to, first by the one agency and then by the other, were very noteworthy, and to them quite as much as to the fiscal reforms of the sixth decade of the nineteenth century must be attributed the remarkable development of newspaper enterprise during this period.

The earliest effect of railways upon newspaper enterprise appeared in the speedier, cheaper, and safer reporting to the London offices of occurrences in the provinces and more distant parts. During the first years of Queen Victoria's reign the metropolitan journals were able to publish much fuller and more

varied accounts of recent events than had before been possible. Londoners were supplied at breakfast time with news as to anything of importance that had happened but a few hours before in Bristol or York, and there was corresponding improvement in the speedy bringing to them of news not merely from Paris or Berlin, but from India and China. The railways, helped by steam packets and other means of conveyance, which enabled the London newspapers to publish all this intelligence, were equally serviceable in carrying the London newspapers to country towns, and in this way, while the country papers, at that time rarely published more than once a week, were made more readable for those who received them at the week's end, there was much more advantage for the London daily papers in that they could be delivered in all parts of England before night-time. The country papers gained much by railways, and by the general social advancement in which railways played a part, but for a long while after they had begun to acquire fresh dignity and influence, they were chiefly important as retailers of such local news and promoters of such local interests as the London papers hardly concerned themselves with. Even the best of them were strictly local papers, giving outside news only at second hand, and debarred from discussing general questions till some time after those questions had been discussed by the London papers and the London discussions had been brought within reach of their readers. Beneficial as they were in so many respects, the railways by themselves hindered quite as much as they assisted the development of country newspapers.

This state of things was altered, and in time almost reversed, by the electric telegraph. While to the London papers it was of vast benefit that they were

able to obtain in a few minutes news which had hitherto occupied as many hours, and in the case of remote places as many days, in reaching them, they lost their old advantage of being the first retailers of general news in the country towns. That news, or so much of it as was cared for, could now travel down by telegraph, whereas at best the London newspapers could only travel by train, and though the expenses of transmission, the comparative poverty of the country newspapers, and other circumstances retarded the change, a complete revolution in provincial journalism began almost with the second half of the present century.

There were influential country newspapers, with able editors and writers employed on them, before the century began, and others followed, as has been briefly noted in an earlier chapter; but no daily paper was published in England, and out of London, until the year in which the Newspaper Stamp Act was passed. Manchester led the way. In 1855 its 'Guardian,' in which, from its starting as a weekly paper in 1821, Archibald Prentice had propounded sound Radicalism, and in which, before 1835, Cobden had written boldly on the need of corn law reform,¹ was converted into a daily paper; and in the same year 'The Manchester Examiner,' dating from 1846, and now more Radical than its compeer, was also enlarged. In 1855, moreover, 'The Liverpool Daily Post' and 'The Sheffield Daily Telegraph' were commenced, and in Edinburgh 'The Scotsman,' which had flourished as a weekly since 1817, began to be issued daily. 'The Liverpool Mercury,' born in 1811, and 'The Birmingham Daily Post,' a new paper, followed in 1857; and in 1858 two other famous weeklies, 'The Newcastle Chronicle,' dating from 1764, and 'The Glasgow Herald,' dating from

¹ Prentice, *History of the Anti-Corn-law League*.

1782, were reshaped. Those nine, all of them Radical, were the only provincial English and Scotch daily papers before 1860. Ireland, however, had several ; nearly all of which were Conservative, the only important exceptions being the venerable 'Freeman's Journal,' and 'The Belfast Northern Whig,' which, a weekly since 1824, was expanded in 1857. In 1859 'The Irish Times,' destined to be the most enterprising supporter of Protestantism in the island, was established in Dublin. In Edinburgh the Conservatives ventured on expanding their venerable 'Courant' in 1860, and 'The Newcastle Journal,' enlarged in 1861, was also Conservative. 'The Edinburgh Daily Review,' commenced in 1861, and 'The Dundee Advertiser' and 'The Leeds Mercury,' both transformed in that year, were Liberal, as also was 'The Western Daily Mercury,' started at Plymouth in 1860, while the rival Plymouth paper of the same year, 'The Western Morning News,' undertook to be 'strictly independent in matters of politics and religion.'

The last-named paper, though less influential than some of the others, was interesting as the preliminary of a movement that was very important in the history of country journalism. Its founders were William Saunders and his brother-in-law Edward Spender, who in 1863 organised the Central Press as an ingenious device for lessening the cost and improving the quality of provincial newspapers. Under this arrangement a staff of London writers was employed in producing from day to day summaries of English and foreign news, trade and other reports, descriptive accounts of parliamentary debates, 'London letters,' leading articles 'on the latest topics of general interest,' careful compilations of literary and religious intelligence,' and much else, all of which were set in type and reproduced in stereotype columns to be sent down to the country editors,

in order that they might select from the parcel so much as they found suitable for their several papers.¹ By this means much labour and expense were avoided, the compositors on the spot having only to deal with local news, and the editors being spared the trouble of writing about any but local concerns. It is evident, however, that the matter thus supplied, if more comprehensive and accurate as regards facts than much that might be put together by ill-informed or careless editors, had of necessity to be colourless in its politics, and was only adapted for a rude stage in journalistic progress. Repudiated from the first by the more enterprising and independent conductors of country newspapers, it was very useful to less ambitious or less capable members of the craft, and as such it was useful in its day. It has, indeed, been continued and elaborated, by disciples and rivals of the proprietors, down to the present time, and is doubtless still a boon to many.

A more important and serviceable scheme of newspaper co-operation was of earlier origin. In the autumn of 1858 Julius Reuter, who since 1849 had been building up a news-agency in Paris, proposed to the managers of 'The Times' that in lieu of the costly reports received by telegraph from its correspondents abroad, or by way of supplement to those reports, they should take from him the digests of foreign news which he was prepared to collect from all sources and to supply at moderate terms to as many newspapers as accepted his help. The offer was declined by the managers of 'The Times,' but it was accepted by James Grant, of 'The Morning Advertiser,' to whom overtures were next made, and after that by several other managers.² The result was the establishment of Reuter's Agency, 30%.

¹ William Hunt, *Then and Now*, p. 73.

² James Grant, *Newspaper Press*, vol. ii. pp. 325-331.

a month being then paid by each subscriber in return for the news supplied by the enterprising caterer. At that time the means of telegraphic communication between England and other parts of the world were scanty, and much of the news had to be obtained through slower channels. Reuter's Agency was ably conducted from the first, however, and proving of great convenience to the few journals that then availed themselves of it, it has been steadily and rapidly developed until it has become almost as necessary a part of newspaper machinery as the electric telegraph itself. Enabling even those papers which can afford to obtain special information from their own representatives abroad to supply much information that would not otherwise reach them, it has been of far more value to the less wealthy papers which are chiefly dependent upon it and on their more prosperous neighbours for intelligence from places outside of England. This remarkable institution would not have been possible were it not for the impetus given to journalism by the removal of fiscal restraints, the increasing demand of the public for newspapers, and the mechanical appliances that have been brought into use, but it has helped materially to strengthen the forces that produced it.

CHAPTER XXII.

TWELVE YEARS OF PROGRESS.

1862—1874.

THE abolition of the paper duty, followed by several postal reforms, changes in the law of libel, and other legislative and executive arrangements which, whether so designed or not, were all helpful to the growth of newspapers in numbers, size, and varieties of style and purport, render the period since 1861 in some respects more important and interesting in the history of journalism than any portion of the preceding two hundred and forty years. A detailed account of this eventful period, however, would necessarily include much with which many readers are already familiar. In such an account also, more would have to be said about men still living, and about political, social, and personal enterprises still in progress than falls within the scheme of the present work. It may suffice, therefore, here to gather up and group together only the most significant of the facts and the most instructive of the inferences from them which are furnished by the record of the past quarter of a century. The nature, though not the complete process, of the remarkable expansions, variations, and innovations that have occurred since 1861 can be briefly sketched.

In 1862, and during many later years, 'The Times' still held its ground as the great potentate in the press

world with an authority that was more and more disputed, but was not yet seriously weakened. Its old quarrel with Lord Palmerston had been abandoned, from conviction or from motives of expediency, and, Lord Palmerston being, till his death in 1865, the special favourite of the strongest party or aggregate of parties in the nation, 'The Times' was in most respects his zealous supporter. 'Lord Palmerston,' as it said in contrasting him with Disraeli, 'represents the precise state of the national mind in opposing unnecessary changes without setting up resistance as a principle, and in countenancing all foreign approximations to the political theories and system of England. It is a minor merit that in all party skirmishes he opposes consummate tact to his opponent's versatile ingenuity.'¹

'The Times' and Palmerston undertook to manage all the domestic affairs of England, to control all its foreign relations, and to dictate to the rest of the world; and their temper was conspicuously shown in their attitude towards what was on some accounts the supremely important movement then on foot. The secession war in the United States involved questions both of national rights and liberties, and of the rights and liberties of individuals and classes bound together by national interests, which were of universal concern, and with which Englishmen, as kinsmen of the Americans, and also by reason of the connections between, as they then were, the great cotton-producing country and the great cotton-manufacturing country, were especially concerned. 'The Times' took the lead among newspapers in supporting the southern rebels, just as among politicians the same views were held not only by Palmerston but by Lord John Russell, Gladstone, and many others whose sympathies were

¹ *Times*, December 31, 1861.

supposed to be less aristocratic and tyrannical than Palmerston's. So strong was its partisanship that, having sent William Howard Russell to follow the war as its special correspondent, it recalled him for having ventured, in describing the battle of Bull's Run, to express opinions of his own which were not those of his employers. In New York it had a more docile correspondent in Charles Mackay, who thence instructed English readers in disparagement of the northern politicians from February 1862 till the close of 1865, except that during some months he had as a substitute Antonio Gallenga, the Anglicised Italian who was a zealous servant of 'The Times' throughout nearly a quarter of a century.¹ Special correspondents had by

¹ Dr. Mackay gives an amusing illustration of the way in which, in this case by accident, his anti-Northern statements were emphasised by Delane. 'Among the most violent of the onslaughts made upon me by the ultra-republican and abolitionist press,' he says, 'was one brought on my innocent head by an unfortunate alteration made in the proof-sheet of one of my letters to *The Times*. Writing of the frequent battles between the brave Confederates and the equally brave Federals, I stated that the results of these sanguinary engagements in no wise helped to bring the war to a conclusion, and that in fact "they proved *nothing* but the courage of the combatants on either side." This passage was queried by the proof-reader, and so brought to the editor's notice, and, misinterpreting my meaning, he changed the word "*nothing*" into "*anything*." When the copy of *The Times* containing this unlucky alteration arrived in New York the vials of wrath were opened against me by *The Herald* and other papers of anti-English politics, of which there were very many during the war. . . . I was denounced in the most violent terms for accusing the Americans, both of the North and of the South, of cowardice, though nothing was farther from my intention. *The Herald* went so far as to hint that it might be a just punishment for the libel of which I had been guilty to burn my house over my head. . . . I afterwards learned that there was great joy in *The Times* printing office, and in the sub-editor's room, and among all the officials who had been called to account for the foolish, though not ill-meant, tampering with my "copy," when the delinquency was traced to the great Jupiter Tonans himself, who, in a moment of confusion, forgetfulness, or perhaps of sleepiness, had taken it upon himself to set me wrong when thinking to set me right.'—(*Through the Long*

this time come to be employed by all the influential papers, but 'The Times' stood alone in obtaining from William Vernon Harcourt the articles on 'the international doctrine of recognition, on the part of foreign governments, of insurgent communities,' on 'the perils of intervention,' on 'the law of blockade,' on 'the Foreign Enlistment Act,' 'on the right of search,' and on the other bearings of the 'Trent' affair, which were republished in 1863 as 'Letters of Historicus on some Questions of International Law.'

The old feud between 'The Times' and the Cobdenites was intensified by their advocacy of rival views as to the merits of the civil war in the United States; but there was hardly any question, great or small, in home or foreign politics, on which the opposite principles that prompted them did not set them at variance whenever controversy arose. An instance occurred in 1863, when Cobden, speaking at Rochdale on November 24 on the need of land law reform, said: 'With regard to some things in foreign countries we don't compare favourably. You have no other peasantry like that of England—you have no other country in which it is entirely divorced from the land. I don't want any revolution or agrarian outrages by which we should change all this; but this I find to be quite consistent with human nature, that wherever I go the condition of the people is generally pretty good, in comparison with

Day, vol. ii. p. 226). Dr. Mackay says (vol. ii. p. 272): 'I learned from an intimate friend of Mr. Seward, that the secretary of state was willing to bestow a liberal proportion of secret service money upon me if I would zealously support the cause of the North in *The Times*, and, as he said, "make my fortune"'; but as he adds that 'the proposition was never formally made,' we may assume that his information was incorrect. During his stay in New York Dr. Mackay contrived to obtain the particulars as to the rules and objects of the then young Fenian organisation which, when published in *The Times*, caused no little commotion.—*Through the Long Day*, vol. ii. p. 230.

the power they have to take care of themselves, and if you have a class entirely divorced from political power, and there is another country where they possess it, the latter will be treated there with more consideration, they will have greater advantages, they will be better educated, and have a better chance of holding property, than in a country where they are deprived of the advantage of political power.'¹ Bright spoke to the same effect. 'If we were fairly represented,' he said, 'feudalism with regard to the land of England would perish, and the agricultural labourer throughout the United Kingdom would be redeemed from that poverty and serfdom which, up to this time, have been his lot. With laws such as we have, which are intended to bring vast tracts of land into the possession of one man, that one man may exercise great political power—this system is a curse to the country, and dooms the agricultural labourer to perpetual poverty and degradation.'²

These mild utterances aroused the wrath of 'The Times.' 'This language,' it said, 'so often repeated, and so calculated to excite discontent among the poor and half-informed, has really only one intelligible meaning: "Reduce the electoral franchise; for when you have done so you will obtain an assembly which will seize on the estates of the proprietors of the land and divide them gratuitously among the poor."'³ And a week later 'The Times' repeated the calumny in a reference to 'the satisfaction with which the poor might regard Mr. Bright's proposition for a division among them of the lands of the rich.'⁴ An angry and memorable correspondence between Cobden and Delane

¹ *Speeches on Questions of Public Policy*, by Richard Cobden, vol. ii. p. 116.

² George Barnett Smith, *Life of John Bright*, vol. ii. p. 118.

³ *Times*, November 26, 1863.

⁴ *Ibid.*, December 3, 1863.

followed on the publication of these strictures, the first of which, attacking himself as well as Bright, was only seen by Cobden after he had written to protest against the slandering of his friend in the second.

On December 4 Cobden addressed to the editor of 'The Times' a letter so rudely worded that he could hardly have expected it to be inserted. The insinuation against Bright he said was 'a groundless and gratuitous falsehood,' and 'a foul libel,' but at the same time only a specimen of the 'too habitual mode of dealing, not merely with individuals, but with the interests of society' which was characteristic of 'The Times' and its editor. 'A tone of pre-eminent unscrupulousness in the discussion of political questions, a contempt for the rights and feelings of others, and a shameless disregard of the claims of consistency and sincerity on the part of its writers,' he added, 'have long been recognised as the distinguishing characteristics of "The Times," and placed it in marked contrast with the rest of the periodical press.' That very intemperate letter was returned on December 7 with a note from 'the editor' suggesting that 'Mr. Cobden had no right to expect him, upon a pretext entirely irrelevant, to publish a series of most offensive and unfounded imputations upon himself and his friends.' But Delane weakened his case by proceeding to offer a very lame excuse for the attacks complained of by Cobden; and he unwarily wrote at the close, 'Perhaps the editor is mistaken in supposing that Mr. Cobden desires the publication of his letter. If, however, he should think that it conduces either to his own interest or to the injury of "The Times," he can probably find some more appropriate organ than "The Times" itself.'¹

¹ *Correspondence between Mr. Cobden, M.P., and Mr. Delane, Editor of 'The Times' (Manchester, 1864), pp. 2-4.*

Cobden took Delane at his word. His indignant protest was printed in 'The Daily News' and 'The Morning Star,' Thornton Hunt declining to copy it into 'The Daily Telegraph.' More than that, it was followed by another letter, dated December 9, in which Cobden, addressing Delane by name, made further and yet angrier complaint as to the way in which he and Bright had been treated. 'You and I,' he wrote, 'have been long personally acquainted. Your handwriting is known to me, and I know you to be the chief editor of "The Times." Under such circumstances I cannot allow you to suppress your individuality, and shelter yourself under the third person of the editorial nominative in a correspondence affecting your personal responsibility for a scandalous aspersion on myself (as I now learn for the first time from you) as well as on Mr. Bright.' Thereupon he accused Delane and 'The Times' of having persistently attacked him and the views he held during many years, and gave ample proof of the injustice that had been done to him, though in terms so violent as to greatly weaken the force of the indictment. 'It has been the fate of "The Times,"' he said in conclusion, 'to help forward every cause it has opposed. By its truculent, I had almost said ruffianly, attacks on every movement while in the weakness of infancy, it has roused to increased efforts the energies of those it assailed, while at the same time it has awakened the attention of a languid public, and attracted the sympathy of fair and manly minds. It is thus that such public measures as the abolition of the corn-laws, the repeal of the taxes on knowledge, and the negotiation of the treaty with France triumphed in spite of its virulent, pertinacious, and unscrupulous opposition, until at last I am tending to the conviction that there are three conditions only requisite for the success of any great

project of reform, namely, a good cause, persevering advocates, and the hostility of "The Times."'¹

The letters that followed, two on each side, are unpleasant reading. Delane could not, or would not, justify his conduct or that of 'The Times,' and he was no match for Cobden in scornful abuse. Cobden incurred just blame for the offensive way in which he punished his adversary; but it was not undeserved punishment, and 'The Times' suffered much in reputation, not merely among Radicals, but among many who opposed them.

Speaking at Birmingham on January 26, 1864, Bright summed up the history of the squabble, and drew his conclusions from it. 'This,' he said of Delane, 'is the gentleman who professes to counsel and lead the nation. Now, suppose he had charged Adam Smith, the great apostle of political economy, with approving piracy, or if he had charged John Wesley with being an encourager of drunkenness and profanity, would it have been more extraordinary than that he should charge Mr. Cobden and myself with instigating agrarian outrages and the seizure of the estates of those who now hold them, for the purpose of dividing them among the people, of course taking nothing from the people for them, and therefore giving nothing to the rich for them? If there be two men in England, I will undertake to say, who have more conscientiously and more faithfully than others preached for twenty-five years the doctrine of absolute honesty with regard to political questions in England, those two men are Mr. Cobden and myself. But Mr. Cobden came forward to assail Mr. Delane when he made this charge against me. He found a man in a mask endeavouring to stab me in the back—for he had not seen that the same man had been, in a previous article, also

¹ *Correspondence, &c.*, pp. 6-9.

stabbing him—and he came forward and dragged his mask from him, and he showed him to the gaze of the whole nation and of the world. And at last, after denial and equivocation of every kind, this unmasked editor of this great journal was obliged to retire from the personal part of this controversy, and to skulk back into his anonymous hiding-place, which suits him better.’¹

There was too much personality in this quarrel, and its occasion was comparatively trivial ; but great questions were involved in it, and neither the political causes to which ‘ The Times ’ devoted itself, nor its immediate interests as the would-be autocrat of the newspaper world, gained anything by Cobden’s death in April 1865. In the following October Palmerston also died, and Cobdenite influences were to survive with more strength and permanence than Palmerstonian influences. The rising statesmen were Disraeli, with whose Toryism ‘ The Times ’ was less in harmony than with Palmerston’s views, which were really more Tory than anything else, and Gladstone, who, though chancellor of the exchequer under Palmerston since 1859, was destined to work out Cobden’s policy far more than Palmerston’s, and with whom, therefore, ‘ The Times ’ was by no means in accord.

At this stage, however, ‘ The Times ’ could not but recognise Gladstone’s great talents and prospective authority, in other besides financial matters. When, at the general election in 1865, Gladstone lost his Oxford seat, ‘ The Times ’ said : ‘ The enemies of the university will make the most of her disgrace. It has hitherto been supposed that a learned constituency was to some extent exempt from the vulgar motives of party

¹ *Speeches on Questions of Public Policy*, by John Bright, vol. ii. p. 338.

spirit, and capable of forming a higher estimate of statesmanship than common tradesmen or tenant-farmers. It will now stand on record that they have deliberately sacrificed a representative who combined the very highest qualifications, moral and intellectual, for an academical seat, to party spirit, and party spirit alone. Mr. Gladstone's brilliant public career, his great academical distinctions and literary attainments, his very subtlety and sympathy with ideas for their own sake, mark him out beyond all living men for such a position. Henceforth Mr. Gladstone will belong to the country, but no longer to the university. Those Oxford influences and traditions which have so deeply coloured his views and so deeply interfered with his better judgment, must gradually lose their hold on him.' ¹

In the years of party disintegration and reconstruction consequent on Lord Palmerston's death—during which, after Lord John Russell's short continuance of his colleague's ministry, Lord Derby took office in June 1866, to be followed, on his death, by Disraeli in February 1868, and after December 1868, when Gladstone first had charge of a government of his own—'The Times' steadily lost ground. The Tories now had a satisfactory champion in 'The Standard,' in which Lord Robert Cecil sometimes wrote, as well as other recognised captains of the party to whom Disraeli's supremacy was still distasteful; and 'The Morning Post' was rising in favour with some. By the younger school of Palmerstonians 'The Daily Telegraph' was heartily approved, and its vigorous and versatile writing, if ridiculed by 'Saturday Review' critics and others, had already secured for it a far larger circulation than any other daily paper could boast of. Edwin Arnold, George Augustus Sala, and their associates knew well

¹ *Times*, July 19, 1865.

how to cater for their huge public. By judicious selection and clever condensation, moreover, the conductors of 'The Telegraph' contrived to give, in less space than 'The Times,' a more acceptable account of each day's occurrences, and it vied with its oldest and wealthiest contemporaries in the variety and fulness of the news brought from abroad. Felix Whitehurst, who was its Paris correspondent between 1864 and 1870, was a typical writer of the 'Telegraph' stamp,¹ and he was but one among many. Zealous in advocacy of its own sort of Liberalism, as well as in its supplying of such news as a large part of the public most cared for, 'The Daily Telegraph' was the most formidable opponent of 'The Times,' and far more successful than either 'The Daily News,' which was Liberal without being Radical, and 'The Morning Star,' which was unmistakably Radical.

'The Morning Star' suffered for its honesty, and for the persistency with which it uttered opinions that were not then popular. An effort was made to give lightness and variety to its contents, especially by the admission of Edmund Yates's articles, some entitled 'The Flâneur,' and others of a miscellaneous sort, while, in 'The Evening Star,' appeared his 'Readings by Starlight'; and there was no lack of more serious writing by able men. Besides Samuel Lucas, its staff included Justin McCarthy, who succeeded Lucas as editor, John Morley, who succeeded McCarthy, Edward Richard Russell, who afterwards became editor of 'The Liverpool Daily Post,' Charles Cooper, who afterwards became editor of 'The Scotsman,' and several others. But at no time, it is said, did the joint circulation of

¹ Whitehurst's *Court and Social Life in Paris under Napoleon III.*, made up of his letters in *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Pioneer*, is still a very amusing book.

both the morning and the afternoon papers exceed 15,000 a day, and this had sunk down to about 5,000 before October 13, 1869, when 'The Evening Star' was abandoned and 'The Morning Star' was absorbed in 'The Daily News.' In saying farewell to his readers the editor assured them that 'The Morning Star' had achieved two objects since its commencement thirteen years before. 'One of these was the advocacy and propagation of political principles which were then counted extreme in their Liberalism ; the other was to establish the feasibility of providing journalism of the best sort under what were then the untried conditions of a penny newspaper.'¹

The death of 'The Morning Star' was hastened, if not caused altogether, by the lowering of the price of 'The Daily News' from threepence, which had been the charge made since 1861 as a poor compromise between the old and the new rate, to a penny. This change was made on June 8, 1868, and was the prelude to a rapid improvement in the fortunes of the paper. In spite of its clever and forcible writing, and of Thomas Walker's well-meaning editorship, 'The Daily News,' not strong enough to compete with its high-priced rivals, nor bold enough to appeal to the great mass of readers who now declined to pay more than a penny for a daily paper, had made but little progress for some years past. None too soon, fresh life was put into it when it became the property of Samuel Morley, Henry Labouchere, Henry Oppenheim, Charles Reed, and some others ; and when a new editor was found in Frank Harrison Hill, who, having edited 'The Northern Whig' in Belfast since 1860, had settled in London as assistant editor and principal leader writer on 'The Daily News' in 1866, contributing to it, among much

¹ *Morning Star*, October 13, 1869.

else, a trenchant series of 'Questions for a Reformed Parliament' in 1867. Hill's responsible editorship only began in 1870; but before that much had been done to advance the paper, both by him and by John R. Robinson, who, taking charge of 'The Express,' the evening companion of 'The Daily News,' as far back as 1855, had in the interval rendered efficient help to both journals. 'The Express' was discontinued on April 30, 1869, on the plea that 'the publication of an evening newspaper was found inconsistent with the arrangements called for by the extending circulation of 'The Daily News';¹ and, as we shall see, those arrangements were energetic and satisfactory in their results.

An interesting but unhappy experiment in journalism was made in 1867. On March 19 'The Day' appeared as a champion of enlightened Toryism. One of its missions was to insist on the importance of adopting proportional representation in the new Reform Bill, then being discussed in parliament. 'To give to every class in this country its due share of representation in the House of Commons, without at the same time bestowing upon any of them a preponderance over all the rest,' it insisted, 'is confessedly the great problem of the present day.'² But, unfortunately, 'The Day,' started with insufficient capital, only lived through forty-one numbers. The last appeared on May 4.

A great alteration in the quality of evening journalism had been commenced by the starting, on February 7, 1865, of 'The Pall Mall Gazette,' the venture of George Smith, a member of the firm of Smith, Elder, and Co., and at one time a principal proprietor of 'The Daily News,' who found an efficient editor in Frederick Greenwood, previously sub-editor of 'The Cornhill Magazine' under Thackeray. 'The Pall Mall Gazette,'

¹ *Express*, April 30, 1869.

² *The Day*, March 19, 1867.

though at first offering only eight pages for twopence, was a bold attempt to realise Thackeray's fancy of a paper 'written by gentlemen for gentlemen,' and to give each afternoon, along with a careful epitome of the morning's news, two or three such articles on political and social questions as had hitherto been rarely offered except in 'The Saturday Review' or 'The Spectator.' Liberal in the Palmerstonian sense, its solid articles were forcible, and lighter matter was supplied by smart writers, among whom, for some time, Anthony Trollope was conspicuous. The first number contained an article on the morrow's opening of parliament, one of a supplementary series of 'Friends in Council,' a lively 'Letter from Sir Pitt Crawley on his entering Parliament,' and a skit on 'Ladies at Law.' The early success of 'The Pall Mall Gazette,' however, owed more to the sensational account of the experiences of 'an Amateur Casual,' furnished by the editor's brother, James Greenwood, than to any of its other contributions. Within a month it was enlarged to twelve pages, and, though an attempt then made to issue eight of its pages, containing all the original matter, as 'a morning review,' in addition to the 'evening review and newspaper,' was soon abandoned, as also was a yet bolder attempt made in 1870 to convert it into a regular morning newspaper of full dimensions, the afternoon sheet, if hardly successful from a commercial point of view, soon became an influential organ of opinion.

No less interesting was the appearance, on December 8, 1868, of 'The Echo,' as a halfpenny paper, giving original articles as well as news, in four compact pages, with four columns in each. 'The Echo' was projected by Cobden's old friend and associate, John Cassell, of the firm of Cassell, Petter, and Galpin, as a thoroughly Radical journal. It was begun on the eve of Glad-

stone's taking office as premier. 'The nation has elected Mr. Gladstone to its highest office,' it said in the opening article, 'and while he is fortifying himself with individual support, we may step forward and survey the task which awaits the complete action of his cabinet.' 'It will be our duty,' it was added, 'as serving the nation at large, to criticise the action of the government with impartiality. We hope for much from Mr. Gladstone; we know how severely he will be tried.'¹ Edited during many years by Arthur Arnold, and with Frances Power Cobbe for one of its principal writers, 'The Echo' appealed to a different class of readers, and depended more than its costlier rival upon news reports for its popularity, but it was no less significant as an innovation on the old methods of afternoon journalism.

Another change may here be noted. 'The Globe,' falling into new hands, and finally abandoning the Liberalism for which it had been famous in the days of Colonel Torrens, was altered in shape and reduced in price to a penny on June 28, 1869, and became a vigorous exponent of the cautious Conservatism of men like Sir Stafford Northcote. As nine years before, on June 11, 1860, 'The Evening Standard' had been commenced, or revived, as a pendant to 'The Standard,' which had been converted from an afternoon into a morning paper in 1857, the London Tories had now two evening papers, both giving fuller news within their wider limits than there was room for either in 'The Pall Mall Gazette' or in 'The Echo,' which, smaller in size, devoted more space to original writing in the interests of diverse phases of Liberalism.

The great quickening of Liberal opinion which compelled Disraeli to pass the Reform Act of 1867, and

¹ *Echo*, December 8, 1868.

the demand for fresh legislation which was responded to by the short administrations of Lord Derby and Disraeli before the autumn of 1868, and after that much more when Gladstone became premier with Bright as a member of his cabinet, gave new life to journalism in the provinces as well as in London. Country newspapers, indeed, now first acquired the full measure of dignity and influence they have since possessed. The few that had begun ten or a dozen years before to be issued daily instead of weekly were now worthy rivals of the London press, and the number was added to nearly every year. Most of these were Liberal, and generally Radical, in their politics ; but, among others, the Birmingham Conservatives had in 1862 their 'Daily Gazette' in opposition to 'The Daily Post'; in 1863 'The Manchester Courier' entered boldly into rivalry with 'The Manchester Guardian' and 'The Manchester Examiner'; and in Leeds 'The Yorkshire Post' placed itself, in 1866, in competition with 'The Leeds Mercury.' These and the other country daily papers secured the services of editors and leader writers on a level with all but the most eminent of those employed in London. Most of them had correspondents in London who forwarded, first by post and afterwards by telegraph, special reports of parliamentary proceedings and general events of importance ; and arrangements were made for collecting all such local news as was interesting to readers within the areas for which they catered. In these ways, all other news of interest being compactly given as well, and the whole being adequately commented on from local as well as from imperial stand-points, the district papers were made in many respects more attractive and valuable, for their districts, than the London papers could be. The monopoly and even the

supremacy of 'The Times' and its metropolitan contemporaries were thus effectively broken down.

Meanwhile the country weekly papers prospered in like ways. New ones were started, and old ones were improved, in the smaller towns and the towns that had ceased to be small through the spread of industrial and even of agricultural energy. While the great towns, like Manchester and Liverpool, Leeds and Newcastle, Birmingham and Plymouth, became, as Edinburgh and Glasgow had been before them, capitals of great provinces, and produced daily papers, as well as other things, for the benefit of the large areas around them, thus to some extent usurping the old functions of the metropolis on the Thames, there was an ample growth in each of these areas of more or less skilfully conducted weekly papers which took the place of, and generally equalled if they did not surpass, such weekly papers as had existed only a generation before in Manchester and the other local centres.

These various developments were much aided by the extension of the railway and yet more of the telegraphic systems, and by other organisations which they encouraged or facilitated. The plan for supplying from London digests of news, original articles, and even stereotyped columns of matter ready for insertion in local journals which, as has already been noted, took shape in the establishment of the Central Press in 1863, was expanded or modified in the Central News in 1870, and further improved upon by the National Press Agency, of which Edward Dawson Rogers was the manager. These and other institutions, though very serviceable to small and struggling papers, were not much cared for by those provincial dailies which could afford to obtain what they wanted in more independent ways. The provincial dailies, as well as their

humbler contemporaries, however, were admirably served by the Press Association which was started in 1868 as an offshoot of the Provincial Newspaper Society, and to meet a necessity that had long been growing.

As far back as 1852 the several telegraph companies had begun to make special arrangements for the supply of news from London, chiefly on commercial and sporting affairs; and this, collected by their own clerks, was transmitted at reduced rates, but often tardily and inaccurately, to the newspaper offices in which it was desired. The arrangement, welcome at first, soon proved unsatisfactory. In 1856 John Edward Taylor, of 'The Manchester Guardian,' sought to obtain a special report of the proceedings in parliament, but was not allowed to have any but that prepared for all the country papers by the 'intelligence department' of the combined telegraph companies. In 1860 much inconvenience was caused by serious blunders in the report of Gladstone's budget speech which had been supplied to 'The Liverpool Mercury,' 'The Western Morning News,' and other papers. Grievances like those were frequent and various, and for some time the country newspaper managers protested in vain against the formidable monopoly which the telegraph companies were acquiring. The managers complained that they were at the mercy of the companies, being charged exorbitantly for late and untrustworthy information, and, if they rejected this, being altogether debarred from providing their readers with much news that they looked for. At length the grievance assumed such proportions that it became a prominent ground for the agitation in favour of placing the telegraphs under state management, and, in anticipation of this important change, which came into force

in February 1870, suitable arrangements were made for enabling newspaper intelligence to be systematically and cheaply transmitted along the telegraph wires. As part of these arrangements, a Press Association, started in Manchester in 1865 by John Edward Taylor and others, was reshaped as the Press Association which has existed in London since 1868.¹

The purpose of this remarkable and successful organisation, of which John Lovell was the manager until, in 1880, he became editor of 'The Liverpool Mercury,' was to supply all newspapers, whose proprietors were members of the company, with every sort of news that they could require, political bias being as far as possible excluded, and the information, especially as regards parliamentary proceedings and public meetings, being given at length or in epitome according to the exigencies of the various subscribers. Especially useful to country papers in obtaining news from London, it was also very useful to London papers in obtaining news from the country. It and the Central News, and other agencies competing with them or supplementing their work, have been of incalculable service in improving the machinery of journalism.² Concurrent with their progress, as collectors and distributors chiefly of English news, moreover, has been that of Reuter's and similar agencies, specially concerned in the collection and distribution of news from abroad.

News from abroad did much in 1870 and afterwards to raise the fortunes of several newspapers. In obtaining from their special correspondents graphic accounts of the

¹ Whorlow, *The Provincial Newspaper Society*, pp. 74-86; William Hunt, *Then and Now*, pp. 109-148.

² In 1871 the number of words transmitted to newspapers through the Postal Telegraph Department was 21,708,968. The figures had risen to 327,707,407 in 1881, and to 451,061,164 in 1886; and this apart from thirty special wires used by newspapers.

incidents of the American civil war, the rivals of 'The Times' had for the first time emulated the success with which it had made English readers familiar, week by week, with the progress of the Crimean war. The war between Austria and Prussia in 1866 was too short and sudden to give any considerable occupation to the special correspondents, although William Howard Russell's letters to 'The Times' thereon served to maintain his and its reputation for pre-eminence in this new line of journalism. When, in July 1870, however, Napoleon III. rushed into his suicidal contest with Prussia, the conditions were different. Russell continued to be the most careful and intelligent describer and critic of the military operations that ensued, but he had at least one competitor more enterprising than himself, besides several others who were able to send home, to some of the provincial as well as to the London journals, lively reports of what they saw and heard.

Archibald Forbes, the son of a Scotch minister, had shown his roving disposition by running away from college, and had served as a private soldier in India and elsewhere, before, finding himself in London in 1868, he started, at the age of thirty, on a literary career. 'The London Scotsman,' a small weekly paper, had lately been commenced, with a serial tale of Scottish life as one of its features, and, the writer of this tale being prevented from continuing his task, Forbes took up the story in the middle and cleverly completed it. Other work fell in his way, but he was chiefly employed on 'The London Scotsman,' of which he acquired the editorship, until the war broke out, when he spent a few weeks in watching its commencement as correspondent with the German army for 'The Morning Advertiser.' While at Metz he made the acquaintance of Russell, who was acting for 'The Times,' and was offered by him a place among

his assistants. Declining the offer, Forbes was, to his great chagrin, recalled a few days later by his employers, on the plea that his letters were not good enough for 'The Morning Advertiser'; and, on his return to London, he called at the 'Times' office in the hope of obtaining a market for some 'exclusive information as to the disposition of the German front before Paris' which he had brought with him. 'The communication was discouraged,' says one of his friends, 'and he stood in Fleet Street, hesitating which of the three daily newspapers in the immediate neighbourhood to offer his "copy" to. He decided, by tossing up, on "The Daily News," and on the following morning made his first appearance in the columns of the journal with which he has since been so intimately associated.'¹ Before another morning came he was on his way back to Metz as the special correspondent of 'The Daily News.'

The conductors of 'The Daily News,' boldly resolving to spare no labour and expense in outstripping 'The Times' and all other rivals in this respect, made lavish provision for the employment of correspondents at the scene of war, and for obtaining their letters by telegraph instead of by post. 'You and Bismarck,' Shirley Brooks once said to Robinson, 'are the only persons who have gained by this war; *you* deserved it.'² Forbes was well fitted to help and share in the gain. A quick observer, a shrewd guesser, and a rapid writer, with great powers of physical endurance and rare versatility in devising and making ready use of expedients for quick movement from place to place and for overcoming all obstacles, he contrived to be in the thick of every important operation, to send home livelier

¹ *Celebrities at Home* (reprinted from *The World*), vol. iii. p. 44. See also *The Journalist*, January 14, 1887.

² Hatton, *Journalistic London*, p. 56.

reports of his experiences than any one else could have penned, and often to be far ahead of all his rivals.

A characteristic anecdote is told of his exploit after the surrender of Paris in January 1871. 'The correspondent of "The Daily News" was the first newspaper man in Paris after that eventful day, and conveyed his impressions by means of a long-concerted scheme. Riding into Paris from the north side, he saw all that was to be seen, and, after surmounting various difficulties, contrived to get out again, rode to Ligny, and travelled by train all the way to Carlsruhe, whence he forwarded his letter of three columns by telegraph to London, and then returned to Paris, to find a couple of special correspondents there to laugh at his apparently tardy arrival, and tell him—all in a good-natured fashion—that at last they had got the better of him, and left him "out in the cold." He did not reply. There is a canny northern proverb to the effect that "it's a canny thing to say nowt," and on this he acted, until "The Daily News" arrived in Paris, and his friendly rivals were thunderstruck to find that they had been anticipated by three days.'

¹

Three months later, after the communists' insurrection had broken out in Paris, and he had been compelled, in self-defence, to assist in some of their proceedings, Forbes determined to force his way out and bring his own parcel of news to London. 'Armed with one official envelope directed to the Queen of England,' according to the same informant, 'he escaped from the burning city, and, by means of another dummy letter addressed to Lord Granville, obtained precedence at the crowded ferry. Thence he rode to St. Denis, and, writing by the way, came on to England by train and mail-boat, on which he was the solitary passenger. At

¹ *Celebrities at Home*, vol. iii. p. 46.

Calais he telegraphed to "The Daily News" to keep space, and he arrived at the office, with his account of Paris in flames, at six A.M. At eight appeared the special edition of the newspaper, and at a quarter to ten Mr. Robinson found his correspondent asleep in his room, with the "Post Office Directory" for a pillow. As Mr. Forbes's letter was the first intimation of the state of Paris received in this country, the excitement was great. In the afternoon a question was asked of Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons whether the government had any information of the condition of the French capital, as set forth in "The Daily News." He replied that he had no information, and sincerely hoped that the statements in that journal were exaggerated. Subsequent information proved that the account of Mr. Forbes was rather under than over stated.¹

During the war, and mainly by reason of its graphic letters on the subject, the circulation of 'The Daily News' rose from 50,000 to 150,000 a day. All the credit was not due, however, to Forbes's contributions, which were afterwards reprinted as 'My Experiences of the War between France and Germany.' The work of several hands besides his appeared in another reprint, 'The War Correspondence of "The Daily News,"' and yet another was 'The Diary of a Besieged Resident in Paris,' by Henry Labouchere. The large library of books issued on the same theme attests the zeal of other able newspaper correspondents, notably 'My Diary in the Last Great War,' recounting Russell's experiences in the service of 'The Times.'

If 'The Daily News' profited most by this melancholy business, there were few papers which did not gain fresh readers by the keen desire of the public for information, and the evening journals were especially

¹ *Celebrities at Home*, vol. iii. p. 48.

benefited. 'The Observer,' also, without a rival in publishing such news as reached London late on Saturday night and on Sunday morning, was in this way revived from many years of apathy, and able to take for itself and to maintain a unique position as a high-priced Sunday paper, replacing 'The Times' and the other journals for the one day in the week on which none of them were issued. The results to the public from all the zeal for late news which was thus encouraged may not have been wholly advantageous; but their bearing on the modern progress of journalism was all the more remarkable when we take account of the drawbacks to their value.

Newspapers were, perhaps, at their highest level of real value, though not of influence or circulation, in 1870 and the few years ensuing. Nearly everything, so far as we now know, that could be done for them in the way of mechanical conveniences and freedom from fiscal and legislative restraints had by that time been done. It had come to be possible for a large and well-printed sheet, supplying intelligence from all parts of the world, put together at great cost, and edited with great care, to be sold for a penny; and the number of people able and anxious to read good newspapers had grown with the trade that catered for them. The competition between rival producers was keen enough to force them to use all their wits in seeking and winning public favour, but not yet so keen as to drive them often into unworthy ways of attracting and amusing readers.

Of the three firmly-established penny daily papers in London each had a place and a function of its own. 'The Daily News' was as Radical as it dared to be, considering its recognised position as the champion, though not the avowed organ, of Gladstone's reforming government, and it worthily performed its office.

Towards the passing of the Irish Church Disestablishment Act in 1869, the Irish Land Act in 1870, and all the other great measures of that time, it rendered material help, and if it was less zealous in its support of some of the later projects of the ministry, it was honestly and effectively ministerialist. The sound judgment, the generous sympathies touched with honest cynicism, and the incisive writing, of its talented editor, all aptly shown in the remarkable series of 'Political Portraits' which he reprinted from the 'Daily News' in 1873, gave the paper such political weight as it had never had before; and Hill received capable assistance from Justin McCarthy and such other writers, serious and light, as Robert Giffen, E. L. Godkin, P. W. Clayden, and William Black, as well as from all the correspondents specially employed in war time. 'The Daily Telegraph' claimed to be no less Liberal, but adopted a method of its own in addressing the large body of readers whom it pleased. Its politics were more gushing and versatile, and, while it made its politics entertaining, it offered plenty of other entertainment in better contributions to the reform of social abuses than James Greenwood's imaginary account of a 'man and dog fight' in Staffordshire, which, anticipating the 'sensational journalism' of more recent years, did something at the time to discredit it. 'The Standard,' then edited by Captain Hamber, was more thoroughgoing in its Toryism than it had formerly been or was soon to be, but was none the less acceptable to its Tory readers on that account. The bold line taken up by it in opposition to Gladstone's Irish church and land-law reforms was in keeping with the fierce advocacy of the cause of the Southerners in the American civil war by which the famous letters of 'Manhattan' had greatly increased its circulation a few years before.

Of the three high-priced London morning papers, 'The Morning Post' alone was thoroughgoing and consistent in its Toryism ; but both the others agreed with it in some essentials. 'The Morning Advertiser' was converted from Liberalism by the interference of the Gladstone government with the 'vested interests' of its publican readers, culminating in Bruce's Liquor Licences Act of 1871, and, James Grant being succeeded as editor by Colonel Richards, what was scornfully described as 'the alliance of Beer and the Bible' had vigorous and outspoken support from 'The Advertiser.' 'The Times' was more dignified and discreet in its leanings towards Tory tactics and its insistence on Tory principles ; but already 'the decline of "The Times"' had become a subject of common talk, a ground of lamentation for its admirers and of rejoicing for its opponents.

A formidable indictment of 'The Times,' one of many such, written in the spring of 1871, shows us how it was then judged by competent critics. 'Certainly,' said the writer, after contrasting it with the penny papers, "'The Times" is still the great parliamentary reporter ; its space does that for it. Neither has any diminution yet appeared in the vast array of its advertisements. Besides parliamentary reports and advertisements, however, what have we ? Not even a good arrangement. The "make-up" seems to be too often the result of accident rather than of anything else ; the principle of a judicious subordination being so little respected that it is as likely as not for some insignificant topic to fill a couple of columns, while really important subjects are dismissed in a paragraph. Not good correspondence. For a paper of its class "The Times" is one of the worst-informed journals of the world. It is difficult to find any great or remarkable

transaction happening anywhere upon the whole continent which has received from "The Times" anything like an appropriate notice, even if it has received any notice at all. The recent war and the disastrous scenes at Paris form, of course, an exception ; but even the war correspondence of more than one metropolitan rival is, as usual, preferred by a large circle of readers.' Concerning other foreign affairs, it was pointed out that 'The Times,' when it touched on them at all, was more ignorant or more misguided than any of its leading contemporaries, faulty as they might be. So it was as regards the great national movements then going on in Austria, Italy, and Spain, and as regards other concerns. 'The dangerous crisis in the Danubian principalities, the attitude of the Tzar towards the Russian leaders of the Pan-Slavist movement, even the position of parties in the German Reichstag, are all so many scarcely opened, or closed and sealed, books to the huge newspaper of Printing House Square.'

The last and most serious count in the indictment touched on matters nearer home. 'One relic of its past,' it was said, '"The Times" still hugs with unalterable fondness—its Irish policy. What that policy has cost both the English and Irish nations before now it boots not to inquire at length. How often have dispassionate witnesses borne testimony to the fearful exasperation that awoke among the tortured people when, in the melancholy time of the great Irish exodus, "The Times" raised its song of triumph over the flight of the famishing myriads, exclaiming, with thoroughly English exultation over calamity, that the Celts were going "with a vengeance." The lesson of hate once taught is not easily forgotten, and we know how to return "with a vengeance" has continued to be the aspiration of the survivors and heirs of the expatriated Celts.

This office of "The Times" is only too well appreciated in Ireland. When the provisions of the last Peace Preservation Act increasing the remedies against incendiary writing were being introduced, one of the commonest remarks called forth by the measure was that while "The Times" continued to lavish its daily diatribes against Ireland, Fenianism would never stand in need of any other incendiary writing. To this hour the bitter insults of "The Times" continue to be the texts for the most passionate appeals of the anti-English party. It is useless to assure large classes of Irishmen that, when the leading English journal writes thus, the majority of Englishmen are not of the same opinion, and perpetuation of Celtic hatred is part of the price paid for the reputation of "The Times" as a representative journal. More than that, it does form the opinion of many Englishmen, and that most mischievously. Everyone who reads the Irish correspondence of "The Times," its sensational telegrams, its reports of outrages, its prominent narratives of Lotharios horsewhipped and robberies expected, must find it difficult to remember that Ireland is the least criminal country in Europe, that the breach of the social virtues is almost unknown, that, except an odd squireen or land-agent, who has generally richly deserved the execrations of the community, the Kerry hills and Tipperary mountains, the midland pastures and the southland tillage fields, are as safe as Fleet Street or the Strand.¹

These sentences are from 'The Examiner,' about which, as we have seen something of its work in Leigh Hunt's and Albany Fonblanque's days, a little more may here be said. Fonblanque, who had long ceased to edit his paper or to write much for it, had been urged, after 'The Saturday Review' established new

¹ *Examiner*, April 15, 1871.

rules for weekly journalism, to reconstruct it in a form fitted for carrying on in new lines its old Radical war against Toryism, Whiggism, and all obstructive forces, however styled. He did not do this, however, and in 1867 he sold it to William Torrens McCullagh, who had now altered his name to McCullagh Torrens. Torrens reduced the price from sixpence to threepence, but did not change the shape or plan, and in his hands 'The Examiner' lost all that was left of its old character and influence. More than half of the space was occupied with ill-assorted scraps of stale news, and but three or four pages were allowed for original writing, which latter was entrusted to incompetent and ill-paid scribes, except now and then when the proprietor had some personal object to serve by wielding his own once vigorous pen. The paper had sunk to its lowest ebb at the close of 1870, when the copyright was bought by a too sanguine Radical, who hoped that, with the scanty means at his disposal, he might be able to restore it, under the fresh conditions that had arisen, to something like the position and influence it had held earlier in the century. Accordingly a new series of 'The Examiner,' offering for threepence nearly as much matter as 'The Saturday Review' or 'The Spectator' provided for sixpence, and similar in arrangement, though not in tone, was commenced on January 7, 1871.

'The Examiner' in its altered form discussed the political and other affairs of the day in an altogether independent spirit, the editor and most of those who wrote for him being in general agreement with the views of John Stuart Mill and such men as Cairnes and Fawcett, and therefore in the main with those of Cobden and Bright ; but they ventured to think for themselves, and, as plain speakers of their thoughts, they made no attempt to trim their phrases so as to obtain outward

accord between all the opinions they severally expressed. Commending whatever they approved in the policy of the Gladstone administration, and endorsing it as a whole, they did not shrink from criticising or blaming when they held that criticism or blame was called for, and they used a like freedom in discussing all social and general questions. Recognising the necessity of opportunism in statesmanship, they protested against any patchwork legislation calculated to aggravate rather than to remove the evils afflicting society. They insisted on the need of striking at the root of abuses as the only means of really overcoming them, and with this object they used the occurrences of the hour to illustrate and enforce ethical and economical laws which seemed to them to be too much ignored, even by those who professed to obey them. They fearlessly attacked whatever conventional arrangements, theological or other dogmas, and political and other traditions, they deemed obnoxious. Deprecating all foreign complications, oppression of subject races, as in India, and such misgovernment in Ireland as even Gladstone's beneficent reforms as regards land-ownership, ecclesiastical control, and so forth appeared to deal with but inadequately, they anticipated several problems that have since attracted general attention. Desiring many social reforms, they dwelt especially on the importance of removing all arbitrary restraints upon the free action of women, either as bread-winners or as citizens. They incurred the reproach of riding too many hobbies, but several of the hobbies they rode were by their efforts brought into prominence, and shown to be, to say the least, in no way dangerous.

The new line taken by 'The Examiner' frightened away from it nearly all of the few dozen readers who remained at the end of 1870, but other readers came to

it, and, with a respectable circulation, it acquired a very considerable influence in the course of the next three years. John Stuart Mill wrote some articles for it, and in it Algernon Charles Swinburne first issued his 'Diræ,' a series of political sonnets. Other and more frequent writers, whose names have since come to be well known for other journalistic and literary work, were H. D. Traill, W. A. Hunter, William Minto, Richard Garnett, John Macdonald, Robert Williams, Mrs. Fawcett, Frances Power Cobbe, and Frederika Richardson, afterwards Mrs. Macdonald. On May 17, 1873, nine days after the death of Mill at Avignon, a double number of 'The Examiner' was published, containing twelve articles on various aspects of his character and work which had been contributed by Herbert Spencer, Cairnes, Frederic Harrison, Henry Fawcett, W. T. Thornton, W. A. Hunter, William Minto, and others.

In the autumn of 1873 'The Examiner' was sold to P. A. Taylor, by whom it was transferred soon afterwards to Lord Rosebery, among its later editors being William Minto and Robert Williams. Passing into yet other hands, it was allowed to die ingloriously in 1880.

The weekly papers which, apart from political purpose, 'The Examiner' most nearly resembled—'The Saturday Review' and 'The Spectator'—were more fortunate. 'The Saturday Review,' without quite abandoning its claim to independence or its old antagonism to 'The Times,' and losing much of the vigour with which it started, was now successful as being, in some respects and very different ways, a counterpart of 'The Times' among the weeklies. 'The Spectator' prospered by combining less thorough Radicalism than 'The Examiner' set forth with the skilful utterance of views in theology and philosophy which were agreeable to latitudinarian churchmen and thoughtful dissenters.

The political attitude of 'The Spectator' at this time may be seen from its remarks on the memorable address issued by Gladstone to his Greenwich constituents on January 23, 1874, announcing his intention to dissolve parliament, and to arrange for abolition of the income tax as a prelude to further and extensive reforms. 'No sincere Liberal,' said 'The Spectator,' 'will doubt that Mr. Gladstone's appeal to the people of England ought to meet with a cordial and grateful response. This government has been distinguished above all other Liberal governments for the honesty and earnestness with which it has redeemed its pledges, instead of using them mainly as baits to catch votes. It has been a steady, and an upright, and a Liberal government, not a Conservative government with a Liberal name, and has done more to gain for the people of the United Kingdom some addition to that stock of human happiness which, as Mr. Gladstone as truly as pathetically says, is never too abundant, than any government of the present generation. The genuine Liberals, who see its shortcomings best, will also best see its immeasurable superiority to anything likely to replace it.' ¹

With those trustful remarks of 'The Spectator' it is interesting and convenient here, though this is not altogether the place for them, to compare the indignant observations of 'The Pall Mall Gazette' on the same manifesto. 'The authority which he wants and openly asks for,' we were told, 'is a personal authority, renewed and confirmed by a *plébiscite*: "Unambiguously express your opinions once more, or, in other words, make me again personally supreme and paramount over the other branch of the legislature. Make me again the absolute ruler I was five years ago, confirm the powerful and

¹ *Spectator*, January 30, 1874.

authentic, but now more remote judgment of 1868, and I in return will remit you the income tax, lighten your local burdens, and free your breakfast tables." Such is the offer, and, whatever we think of its terms or its morality, its candour is undeniable.'¹

The answer given by the constituencies to Gladstone's appeal, placing the Conservatives in power in March 1874, and setting many fresh forces at work, had noteworthy results on the progress of journalism.

¹ *Pall Mall Gazette*, January 25, 1874.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CLASS AND CLIQUE JOURNALISM.

1862—1886.

THOUGH politics and such social matters as have clear political bearings are supposed to be the chief business of the more important newspapers, nearly all of them have from the first paid more or less attention to affairs of trade, to popular amusements, to fresh productions in literature, science, and art, and to whatever else is interesting to any large section of their readers, and, as we have seen, several journals were started long ago with the object of supplying fuller information than was elsewhere given about particular concerns, in ways either of pastime or of serious occupation, and of commenting thereupon. In recent years, however, there have been remarkable expansion and variety in what may be called the by-paths of journalism, and though no more than a desultory review need be attempted, a little must now be said about these.

(When the abolition of the paper duty opened the way for further development of all sorts of newspaper enterprise there were, besides several religious journals, ten principal weeklies, each with one or more rivals, which may be grouped under our miscellaneous category. 'The Illustrated London News' had for its speciality the pictures that accompanied its budget of general information; and 'Punch' also joined pictures with its

jokes and humorous strictures on current events and contemporary follies. 'The Athenæum' took the lead in literary criticism, and included science, art, and theatrical amusements in its scheme of general culture. 'The Lancet' and 'The Army and Navy Gazette' represented two of the professions. 'The Economist' discussed and explained commercial affairs, and 'The Builder' was one of the oldest and most successful of particular trade organs. 'The Field' was 'the country gentleman's newspaper,' dealing with sports, pastimes, and all country pursuits. 'Bell's Life in London' was devoted to other sports, and, especially in the old days, to pugilism; and 'The Era,' originally a publican's paper, had come to take particular interest in theatrical affairs. There were four or five times as many other class and clique papers in 1862, and the number has increased seven or eight fold during the past quarter of a century, with considerable re-arrangement, subdivision, and intermixing of specialities, and with some very curious additions to the list.

For a long time, after as well as before the death of its founder in 1860, 'The Illustrated London News' had almost a monopoly in pictorial journalism. Herbert Ingram and his successors were able to either crush or control nearly all formidable rivals throughout six or seven and twenty years, the most important of these being 'The Illustrated Times,' with the exception, perhaps, of 'The Queen.' Started in 1861 by S. O. Beeton, and carried on with difficulty for some while as a miscellany of news and gossip for ladies' reading, with fashion-plates as its principal illustrations, 'The Queen' only began to be prosperous after it had been bought by Horace Cox, the versatile and speculative deputy assistant judge of the Middlesex sessions, and was placed under the same management as 'The Field,'

of which he was also proprietor. A humbler but very enterprising competitor with Ingram's journal was 'The Penny Illustrated Paper,' also started in 1861, which in time was acquired by the owners of 'The Illustrated London News,' and amalgamated with 'The Illustrated Times.'

Herbert Ingram was a zealous and intelligent caterer for the large body of readers whom he attracted to his paper, and his policy was ably continued by his son, William Ingram. Even at the time of the Crimean war 'The Illustrated' had three 'special artists,' who sent home to it sketches of interesting scenes, Samuel Read from Constantipole and the Black Sea, Edward Goodall from the Baltic, and J. W. Carmichael from the Crimea. For these and others plenty of useful work was found in peace time as well as during later wars, William Simpson, who accompanied the Abyssinian expedition, having since then been one of the most energetic. 'When the great war of 1870 between France and Prussia broke out,' says the art editor of 'The Illustrated,' 'the special artists on both sides encountered all sorts of hardships, and passed through all kinds of adventures in fulfilling their duties. Besides being frequently arrested as spies, and undergoing the privations of beleaguered places, they had to run the risk of shot and shell, and sometimes they were obliged to destroy their sketching materials under fear of arrest. One of them was in custody as a spy no less than eleven times during the war. The danger of being seen sketching, or being found with sketches in their possession was so great, that on one occasion a special artist actually swallowed his sketch to avoid being taken up as a spy. Another purchased the largest book of cigarette papers he could obtain, and on them he made little sketches, prepared in case of danger to smoke

them in the faces of his enemies.' When the German armies were closing round Paris one of the five artists employed by 'The Illustrated' remained inside the city, and during the siege his sketches were sent off by balloon.¹

The first of its rivals that 'The Illustrated London News' could not suppress was 'The Graphic,' which had a memorable origin. Among the artists employed as draughtsmen and engravers by 'The Illustrated' during many years prior to 1869 were two talented brothers, George and William Thomas. George Thomas died before he was fifty, and, for the benefit of his family, it was proposed to reissue in a memorial volume some specimens of his work. The proprietors of 'The Illustrated,' however, refused to lend the wood-blocks required for this purpose, and the ill-feeling that arose led to William Thomas's withdrawal from the establishment.² He opened communications with Nathaniel Cooke, Herbert Ingram's brother-in-law and partner, who had long before retired from the firm, and with other capitalists, and means were found without much difficulty for starting 'The Graphic' in December 1869.

The new paper soon achieved the success it deserved. Thomas and his editors—at first Sutherland Edwards and then Arthur Locker—obtained the help of Frank Holl, Luke Fildes, Hubert Herkomer, Mrs. Butler, Mrs. Allingham, and many other artists, and also of a large staff of clever and brilliant writers. 'The Graphic,' when it commenced, was in advance of anything that had yet been produced in the way of illustrated journalism, with an ample complement of literary strength, and the breaking out of the Franco-

¹ Mason Jackson, *The Pictorial Press of London*, pp. 330-340.

² Hatton, *Journalistic London*, p. 238.

German war soon after was very serviceable to it. The vigorous competition maintained between it and 'The Illustrated' was wholly to the advantage of the public, and, contrary to general expectation, was only beneficial to both papers. Both have prospered, and they have been stimulated by one another, and by the large sale their enterprise has secured, to add every year alike to their artistic and to their literary value. Providing fiction as well as fact in their columns, they are somewhat less of newspapers than 'The Illustrated' and its older rivals used to be, but they have not on this account neglected the functions proper to pictorial journalism. If 'The Graphic' has given evidence of more variety in the choice of interesting material both for artistic and for literary work, 'The Illustrated,' edited for many years past by John Latey, has not allowed itself to be superseded. For a long time 'Echoes of the Week,' written till recently by George Augustus Sala, in themselves sufficed to attract to 'The Illustrated' a large body of readers.

Of other illustrated papers produced to meet the new public taste which those two had cultivated, the most noteworthy was 'The Pictorial World,' commencing its less prosperous career in 1874. In the same year was started 'The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News,' but both it and 'The Lady's Pictorial' have looked less to pictures than to other matter for their popularity.

'Punch' had outlived many younger rivals during its twenty years' existence before 1862, and has contrived to hold its ground ever since. 'Fun,' started in 1860, and edited first by Tom Hood the younger and afterwards by Henry Sampson, was for many years a dangerous opponent, being lower in price and more Liberal in its opinions ; but neither its Radicalism nor

the Conservatism of 'Judy,' which was begun in 1867, made them as generally acceptable as the indiscriminate satire in which 'Punch' indulged under Mark Lemon and his successor, Shirley Brooks. 'The Tomahawk,' with Matt Morgan as illustrator, which was started in May 1867, was a formidable rival at first, but, having nothing but its cartoons to recommend it, it died in June 1870. 'Punch,' at its lowest level after 1874, when Tom Taylor became editor, began to revive when F. C. Burnand took charge of the comic sheet. Among a crowd of later competitors, some of them mistaking coarseness for wit and singularly devoid of humour, 'Funny Folks' has given a large supply of smart writing in its penny numbers since 1874.

Another and a much more important paper dates from the same year. 'The World' was by no means the first experiment in what is now known as 'society journalism,' but it was nearly the first in our own day to be successful. The idea can be traced back to Queen Anne's time, when Defoe's reports of the Scandal Club in his 'Review' were imitated by many, with refinement by Addison, Steele, and others, and with much offensiveness by writers like Mrs. Manley. Personal abuse and tittle-tattle of all sorts, designed to amuse the public, if not to cause pain to individuals whose follies and weaknesses were described or falsified, or else to gratify the vanity of others whose doings were more amiably recorded, was the life of many papers throughout the eighteenth century, including especially 'The Morning Post' in its earlier days. 'John Bull,' under Theodore Hook, as we have seen, was a conspicuous example of this vicious phase of journalism as it appeared in the nineteenth century, and such papers as 'The Age' and 'The Town,' though even coarser, were not more disgraceful. Edmund Yates,

however, had some ground for claiming to be its most successful adapter for the present generation.

By his gossip as 'The Lounger at the Clubs' in 'The Illustrated Times,' Yates had pleased many readers during three years before May 1858, when he undertook to edit a new paper, 'Town Talk,' projected by John Maxwell. 'My little bantling,' he says, 'was a very different kind of production from the sheet which has in later years appropriated its title. It was a quiet, harmless little paper, with a political cartoon drawn by Watts Phillips, who also contributed its politics and heavy literature. It contained a portion of a serial story, a set of verses, and a certain amount of scissors-work. All the rest of the original matter was mine.' Part of this original matter was a weekly column of 'Literary Talk,' in which, giving a friendly account of Dickens in one week, Yates made in the next some very unfriendly remarks about Thackeray, sneering at him in particular for 'cutting his coat according to his cloth,' showing 'extravagant adulation of birth and position' when lecturing to a fashionable audience, but making "the four Georges" the objects of his bitterest attacks' when lecturing to Republicans in America. Yates said afterwards, 'No one can see more clearly than I do the silliness and bad taste of the article'; but when Thackeray angrily wrote to complain of it as 'slandrous and untrue,' the author, at Dickens's advice, replied that it was Thackeray's letter which was 'slandrous and untrue,' and he accordingly refused to make any apology or reparation. The immediate issue of this unfortunate quarrel was Yates's expulsion from the Garrick Club on the members' resolution 'that the publishing of such articles, being reflections by one member against any other, will be fatal to the comfort of the club, and is intolerable in a society of

gentlemen.’¹ A more remote and important issue was a considerable extension of personality in journalism.

The chief credit, such as it is, of reviving in its modern form this branch of journalism, however, must be assigned, not to Edmund Yates, but to E. C. Grenville Murray. Murray, whose father was supposed to be the second Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, graphically described by him in his ‘Young Brown,’ was a favourite of Lord Palmerston’s, who, in 1852, appointed him to an attachéship in Vienna, with secret permission to act as correspondent of ‘The Morning Post,’ the Palmerstonian organ at that time. Murray’s letters were sent home in the Foreign Office bag, but some of them miscarried, and, instead of being delivered to the editor of ‘The Post,’ were returned as ‘dead letters,’ and thus reached Lord Westmoreland, the British minister at Vienna. The ambassador, first informed by them concerning his subordinate’s extra-official occupations, indignantly demanded his dismissal. Murray was not dismissed, but transferred to Constantinople, and thence after a short time sent by Lord Stratford de Redcliffe to act as vice-consul at Mitylene. This exile being irksome to him, he relieved its monotony by writing the ‘Roving Englishman’ series of articles which appeared in ‘Household Words,’ and by which, among other offences against the authorities, he brought general contempt on the great plenipotentiary, whose eccentricities he ridiculed under the character of Sir Hector Stubble. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe sought, as Lord Westmoreland had done, to get Murray removed from the service, but Palmerston’s power was too great. At length, after about two years’ squabbling, the obnoxious attaché was promoted to be consul-

¹ The whole story has been retold and commented on at length by Mr. Yates in his *Recollections and Experiences*, vol. ii. pp. 9–37.

general at Odessa. There he remained ten years, engaged in perpetual war with the English residents until, his patron being dead, and the Earl of Derby, then Lord Stanley, being foreign secretary, he received such different treatment that, throwing up his appointment, he returned to England and made literature his sole occupation.¹

To Murray's instigation, though as much mystery as possible was maintained as to all the arrangements, must mainly be attributed the origination of 'Vanity Fair.' This earliest of the modern 'society journals' appeared on November 7, 1868, the price being then twopence, with the announcement that 'in this show it is proposed to display the vanities of the week, without ignoring or disguising the fact that they are vanities, but keeping always in mind that in the paying and selling of them there is always to be made a profit of the truth'—an ambiguous sentence, very ingeniously constructed. With the thirteenth number, for which a shilling was charged, a coloured caricature of Disraeli, the first of a famous series, was given, and after that the price was for some while sixpence, the paper being by that time considerably enlarged. To this smart and cruel weekly Murray was a regular contributor; but, bitter as it could be, he wanted a bolder channel for his spite, and with this object, in January 1869, 'The Queen's Messenger' was started.

'The Queen's Messenger' did not live long. In June there appeared in it an article on 'Bob Coachington, Lord Jarvey,' one of a series dealing with the politicians of former times, in which very plain language was used about the first Lord Carrington, who, being Robert Smith, the banker, before he was raised to the

¹ *Truth*, December 29, 1880 (containing an 'anecdotal photograph' of Grenville Murray); Yates, vol. ii. pp. 309-312.

peerage, had been serviceable in many ways to William Pitt. By way of punishing the reputed writer for the slanders on his father, the second Lord Carrington horsewhipped Murray at the door of the Conservative Club in St. James's Street on June 22, and for this assault a charge was preferred against him at Marlborough Street police court on July 7. 'After much wrangling,' according to the record, 'Mr. Murray denied the authorship of the article, but declined to answer the questions relating to his connection with the paper. A number of letters, articles in manuscript, and a corrected proof of an article were shown to him, but he declined to say whether they were in his handwriting. He admitted that he had written some articles in "The Queen's Messenger," but said he would rather have cut off his right hand than have written others. Lord Carrington was ultimately bound over to keep the peace in reference to one summons, and committed for trial on the second, charging assault. At the close of the proceedings a disgraceful struggle took place between the friends of the contending parties for the possession of a box containing papers relating to "The Queen's Messenger," and said to have been improperly transferred to the keeping of Lord Carrington's solicitor.' On July 17 Murray was charged at Bow Street with perjury in denying that he had written the article on 'Bob Coachington, Lord Jarvey,' and, after some evidence had been heard, he was admitted to bail on the case being remanded to the 29th. On that day he failed to appear, and 'the police magistrate refusing to give credence to the plea of sudden attack of illness in Paris, whither he was said to have gone to see his son, his recognisances were ordered to be estreated, and a warrant issued for his apprehension.'¹ The only result

¹ Irving, *Annals of our Time*, pp. 877, 881.

of those proceedings, however, was that Murray was kept out of England. He lived in France until his death in December 1880, taking the title of a Spanish lady whom he had married, and being known as Comte de Rethel d'Aragon.¹

'The Queen's Messenger' died in consequence of his flight; but he contributed profusely to 'The Daily News,' 'The Pall Mall Gazette,' and other papers, including 'Vanity Fair,' which profited much through the quickening of public interest in this sort of journalism by the Carrington-Murray scandal. Other 'society journals' were started to meet the demand for smart personalities and scurrility; but only 'Vanity Fair' survived until a new and vigorous competitor appeared in 'The World.'

The scheme of this fresh venture, in some respects more ambitious than any that had been yet attempted, was broached by Yates to Murray early in 1874, and promptly put into shape, these two being equal partners, the one acting as editor with absolute authority in London, and the other being a copious contributor from Paris. The first number of 'The World, a Journal for Men and Women,' appeared on July 8. It promised in the

¹ 'When in the humour,' says his biographer in *Truth*, presumably Mr. Labouchere, 'he was a brilliant conversationalist—humorous, caustic, and full of anecdote. In person he was slim, and rather below medium height, with well-cut features, exceedingly bright eyes, and with a face that lighted up when he was animated; but few of those who may have seen him in an old felt hat and a still older shooting-jacket, strolling along the boulevards or in the alleys of the Bois de Boulogne, would have imagined that they were in the presence of the ablest journalist of the century.' That closing assumption is open to question; but there can be no doubt as to his talents, with a spice of genius. Much of his writing was high-class hack-work. One editor recalls a visit from a respectable solicitor in 1871, who offered to supply him with any quantity of articles from Murray, on condition that payment should be made, not to the author direct, but to the solicitor, who stated that, Murray's brains being mortgaged to his creditors, only an allowance was made to him out of the income he earned.

prospectus, to be 'an amusing chronicle of current history, divested of the nonsense which has hitherto stuck like treacle to public business, so that apparently it could not be touched with clean hands'; to 'recognise women as a reasonable class of the community, whose interests should be equitably considered and their errors explained without levity or hysterics'; to publish 'that rarest of all things—candid reviews of good books, good plays, good pictures, and discoveries in science, treating them as the natural expression of the highest form of intellect, and actually bestowing honest praise on living genius'; and, among much else, to give 'the latest intelligence from the turf, the hunting-field, and the Stock Exchange,' in such ways as to 'vastly surprise those who are wont to look upon sport and city in their conventional aspect.' 'Politics, and even parliamentary proceedings deserving of attention,' it was said, 'will sometimes be discussed from any point of view from which there is a clearer prospect, or less of fog, than is usual. They will be good-naturedly removed from that queer eminence to which they have been hoisted by official vanity and departmental advertisements; they will be restored in safety to the proper place which good sense assigns to them in the concerns of nations; they will be made intelligible to rational persons, over whose minds at present they have little authority and less influence.' One of the chief functions of the paper was stated last, and more humorously than distinctly. "'The World,'" it was announced, 'has pleasant tidings for the court and aristocracy. It will receive contributions from people of rank who know anything worth communicating, and who can write a legible hand. The spelling and grammar of the nobility will be corrected; and manuscripts, when done with, will be discreetly buried at midnight during a thunder-

storm, in order that the capital sin of possessing intellect may never be brought home to anybody. Accounts with contributors to "The World" will be settled every week ; and it is confidently believed that this inducement alone will be sufficient to secure a steady literary support from the great officers of state in a land whose peers and officials are among the keenest of customers.'

Yates's scornful pledge was so far kept that, though names were often told in whispers, no record has been made of the aristocratic contributors to the columns, always the most popular, detailing 'What the World says,' but about some of his other helpers the editor has himself told a good deal. From the commencement T. H. S. Estcott, then almost a novice in London journalism, wrote much on a great many subjects. Henry Labouchere wrote the articles on financial affairs, attacking in particular fraudulent stockbrokers and stock-jobbers and dishonest moneylenders, which attracted great attention, and, by provoking threats of libel actions, effectively advertised the paper. The Earl of Winchilsea was for three months the sporting critic. 'Jezebel *à la mode*' was the first of a series of articles by Mrs. Lynn Linton. Other writers of prose were Dr. Birkbeck Hill and Camille Barrère—an industrious journalist in London before, his share in the Paris commune being forgiven, he became the favourite of Gambetta, and ultimately French minister in Egypt ; to whom were added before long Archibald Forbes, J. Comyns Carr, Dutton Cook, E. S. Dallas, and, most serviceable of all, Henry W. Lucy, whose 'Under the Clock' chat about parliamentary proceedings was instructive as well as amusing. Contributions in verse came from Mortimer Collins, F. J. Scudamore, and Herman Merivale. Grenville Murray sent several 'Portraits in Oil'

from Paris ; and, besides other writing, Yates supplied the first serial novel, 'A Decree Nisi,' being followed in this line by Wilkie Collins, Rice and Besant, Miss Braddon, Hawley Smart, Mrs. Forrester, and others. After a few weeks, in the course of which only 70*l.* was spent in advertisements, and the whole outlay was no more than 700*l.*, 'The World' was an assured success ; and at the end of six months, a quarrel arising between the projectors, and the property being officially valued at 3,000*l.*, Yates became sole owner by paying Murray 1,500*l.* for his investment of 350*l.*¹

If the popularity of 'The World' was largely due to its mild scandal and more or less impertinent tittle-tattle, it must be admitted that all this was far more harmless than anything of the sort that had yet been attempted on so large a scale. It amused many, gratified some, and offended only a few. The weaknesses and vanities of those gossiped about were more often humoured than seriously condemned, and, though to some of its subjects even this treatment was distasteful, flattery was generally preferred to spite. Stern treatment was, as a rule, reserved for such as might be supposed to merit it, and it was most frequent, where it was most allowable, in Labouchere's handling of city frauds and tradesmen's tricks. In the 'Celebrities at Home' series, one of the special and more attractive features of 'The World,' there was proper avoidance of the vicious discourtesies and wanton libels in which Murray and others had before indulged. The rule laid down, 'that no person should be made the subject of one of these articles without his or her consent having been previously obtained, and without full liberty, if they wished it, to inspect the article in proof before it was published,' inevitably weakened some of the articles,

¹ Yates, *Recollections and Experiences*, vol. ii. pp. 321-330.

and favoured inaccuracy in certain directions, but it afforded ample protection both for those who liked and for those who did not like to be thus 'celebrated.' The Prince of Wales was one of those who 'accorded immediate consent' to the proposal that he should be interviewed, and when this had been done by Archibald Forbes, 'his Royal Highness was pleased to express his full approval of the article.' Anthony Trollope was one of those who declined the honour. 'I allow that your articles are cleverly done, and without the least offence,' he wrote; 'also that you have many very distinguished people in your gallery. But I would rather not.'¹

The prosperity of 'The World' encouraged many imitators and more or less successful or unsuccessful rivals. The first of any importance was 'The Whitehall Review,' started on May 20, 1876, by Edward Legge, who left 'The Morning Post' to combine with its 'society journalism' uncompromising Toryism and sturdy support of religious orthodoxy, and who followed the example of 'Vanity Fair' in issuing a weekly cartoon; the 'Leaders of Society' in 'The Whitehall,' however, being women, and not caricatured. Of shorter life was 'Mayfair,' of which a preliminary 'Christmas number' appeared on December 19, 1876, and which was regularly begun as 'a Tuesday journal of politics, society, and literature, unambitiously illustrated,' on January 2, 1877. The editor of 'Mayfair' was Henry W. Lucy, whose clever 'Under the Clock' sketches in 'The World' had pleased so many readers that it was hoped they would suffice to make the new venture successful, especially as Lucy and his friends announced that, though they would not reject wealth if it came in their way, their sole aim was 'to discuss the fashions of

¹ Yates, vol. ii. pp. 331, 332, 333.

the day in a manner unaffected by considerations of mere expediency.'¹ There was some smart writing, and there were humorous little drawings mixed up with the letterpress, in 'Mayfair'; but the contents were unequal and awkwardly put together. Lucy soon withdrew from the speculation, and after other efforts had been made to keep it alive, it came to an end in December 1879. Even more disastrous to its promoters was another paper, 'Pan,' which commenced smartly with illustrations by Alfred Thompson, and with contributions by Grenville Murray, Sala, and others, but which very soon collapsed, being edited during part of its short career by David Anderson. In the meanwhile another speculation by another seceder from the staff of 'The World' had proved thoroughly successful. In 'Truth,' which was started on January 4, 1877, two days later than 'Mayfair,' Henry Labouchere improved upon his experiences under Yates, and was able to give freer utterance to his opinions in politics as well as on social concerns.

Labouchere had had wide experience in other ways before he made journalism one of his professions. After a short and stormy university career, he continued his education by two or three years' wandering about in America, for a part of the time as member of a travelling circus; and he was in America for two or three years longer as an attaché in Washington, after he had entered the diplomatic service. There and elsewhere, in Russia, Germany, Sweden, Italy, and Turkey, he gave nearly as much annoyance to ambassadors and the Foreign Office authorities as did Grenville Murray, though by different conduct. It was his boast that gaming-tables and other pleasure resorts occupied him too much for any time to be left for his official duties, but

¹ *Mayfair*, December 19, 1876.

he was more given to making friendships than enmities, and when he parted company with his employers he bore them no particular ill-will.¹ He settled down in England in 1864, when he was thirty-three, and had sat in Parliament, first for Windsor and then for Middlesex, before 1868, when he became one of the proprietors of 'The Daily News.' His 'Diary of a Besieged Resident in Paris,' contributed to that paper, gave striking evidence of his capacity as a journalist, and other evidence appeared in his contributions to 'The World.' His personal acquaintance with the ways of 'bulls' and 'bears' on the Stock Exchange, of extortionate money-lenders, and of other disreputable people, enabled him to write with such vigour and precision as were rare, and almost unparalleled, in this line of newspaper work. After two and a half years' employment on 'The World' he was well qualified to make profitable use of all his varied experience as proprietor and editor of 'Truth.'

This was perhaps the only paper ever published which more than paid its expenses from the first number, and a few weeks' experimenting resulted in many improvements that increased its popularity and its consequent value as a property. In the 'Entre Nous' columns of 'Truth' there was less fashionable gossip but more of biting satire and straightforward fault-finding than in the corresponding portion of 'The World.' In these columns, as well as in others, moreover, along with the social chit-chat and the personal scorn, not seldom relieved by good-natured paragraphs, there was plenty of outspoken Radicalism, variable in its tone and sometimes illogical, but always smart and often forcible in its utterance. As was to be expected, Labouchere was generally at his best in his exposure of commercial and

¹ Hatton, *Journalistic London*, pp. 97-103.

financial scandals ; but he contrived to make nearly every page of 'Truth' thoroughly readable. In lieu of a long novel, as in 'The World,' each number contained a 'Queer Story,' generally supplied until his death by Grenville Murray. The 'Anecdotal Photographs,' given each week, almost from the first, if not so uniformly complimentary as the 'Celebrities at Home' in 'The World,' were generally quite as accurate and frequently more instructive. The notices of new plays and other amusements were always vivacious and for the most part just in their criticism. 'Truth,' moreover, was exceptionally fortunate in securing as a contributor from Paris Mrs. Emily Crawford, the wife of the 'Daily News' correspondent, whose long residence in France and close intimacy with Victor Hugo, Gambetta, Clémenceau, and every one else of note in France, male or female, during two generations, enabled her to describe the details of political and social life with remarkable precision and truthfulness, her sound judgment and keen sense of humour having at their service a facile pen. Credited with writing a large portion of 'Truth' himself, Labouchere was lucky in his choice of assistants.

Of the younger 'society journals' little needs to be said. 'Life,' commenced six months after 'Truth,' sought favour rather by its daintily executed illustrations—reproductions of foreign pictures being for some time given in alternate weeks with portraits of 'fashionable beauties,' actresses and others, by Frank Miles—than by its written matter. 'Society,' also dating from 1879, had a curious origin and progress. Its precursor was 'The British Mercantile Gazette,' which had given with its drier contents a weekly budget of gossip. This proved so successful that George Plant, the proprietor and editor, shrewdly expanded it into a separate penny

paper which, issued on Wednesdays, also answered so well that in December 1880, a threepenny Wednesday 'Society,' copiously illustrated, was added to the venture. Another change took place in the autumn of 1882, when the price of the paper, then published only on Saturdays, was raised to sixpence, and so continued for some time until it was deemed expedient to revert to the original style and price. Meanwhile a rival, 'Modern Society,' appeared in 1880, and a 'Modern Truth' was started in 1886; the charge for each being a penny, and no great effort being made to achieve literary eminence or to do more than repeat the jokes and information provided by the costlier papers. The taste developed in recent years for this sort of reading has been abundantly catered for, and the result, if not dignified or refining, is perhaps an advance on the penny novelettes on which formerly, milliners, ladies'-maids, and others chiefly depended for their literary entertainment.

Before the penny 'society journals' appeared, there had been several enterprises somewhat akin to them, the most noteworthy being 'Figaro,' started by James Mortimer in 1870, as a Saturday penny miscellany, which essayed satirical handling of political and social as well as theatrical affairs, and was at one time so successful that during a few years a twopenny 'Figaro' was also issued on Wednesdays. The influence of 'society journalism' and its comic adjuncts, indeed, has shown itself in many of the more sedate journals, daily and weekly. Just as Yates amused readers of 'The Illustrated Times' and 'The Morning Star' by his 'Lounger' and 'Flâneur' columns, other papers found it convenient to string together chatty paragraphs dealing with rumours or facts that were hardly suitable material for leading articles. This was especially the

case with the country papers, for which, as has been noted, 'London letters' were long ago prepared. On the other hand, nearly all the 'society journals' have made it their business to discuss, though usually in more playful or mocking terms than were formerly deemed proper, grave political questions and whatever else was of general interest in the events of the day. The influence of 'Truth' and 'The World' and their pioneers on newspaper work has been as marked in some directions as that of 'The Saturday Review' has been in others.

'The Saturday Review,' itself open to the charge of flippancy, has had a very beneficial influence in one field of journalism where the work of its more flippant rivals has been, if anything, pernicious. In criticism and literary culture it set an example that was much needed in 1855. 'The Athenæum' had been in existence for twenty-seven years, and had done immense service as an organ and censor of literature, with more than incidental reference to movements in science and art. 'The Literary Gazette' was also still alive, and there were several weekly papers, 'The Leader,' 'The Critic,' and others which, following the plan of 'The Examiner' and 'The Spectator,' paid special attention to these subjects along with their reports and comments on political and general affairs. Nearly all the daily papers, moreover, included new books, as well as new plays and other novelties, among the subjects dealt with in their columns. All this criticism, however, was apt to be slipshod and often very uncritical. Though 'The Athenæum' continued to be the great literary authority among newspapers, it had lost value as a safe and impartial guide before Hepworth Dixon became its editor in 1853, and Dixon's showy writing and encouragement among his contributors of the strong expression of likes

and dislikes frequently grounded on nothing worthier or safer than personal friendships or animosities, or subservience to publishers and advertisers, caused its steady deterioration from year to year. 'The Saturday Review,' though often more anxious to be smart than to be just, and, written chiefly by men intolerant of everything not bearing the university stamp, had excellent effect in raising the standard of criticism, and this was shown, not only in the improved tone of many of the existing weekly and daily papers, but also in several new enterprises.

One such was 'The Reader,' which, 'The Literary Gazette' having died and 'The Athenæum' having reduced its price to threepence in 1862, was commenced as a large fourpenny 'review of current literature' on January 3, 1863. 'Totally unconnected with any publishing firm,' it was announced, "'The Reader" will show favour to all works of sterling worth, without caring through what channel they come before the public.' Its first editor, amiable, high-minded, and zealous, was John Malcolm Ludlow, and among the writers whom he gathered round him were, in alphabetical order, Shirley Brooks, Llewellyn Davies, Edward Dicey, Albert Dicey, H. R. Fox Bourne, F. J. Furnivall, Francis Galton, Richard Garnett, Mrs. Gaskell, P. G. Hamerton, Frederic Harrison, Thomas Hughes, Holman Hunt, R. H. Hutton, Charles Kingsley, J. Norman Lockyer, Frederick Denison Maurice, Laurence Oliphant, Mark Pattison, William Michael Rossetti, Canon—afterwards Dean—Stanley, and Leslie Stephen. Ludlow's honesty, however, and especially his interpretation of the pledge given in the sentence just quoted, were too much for those who found money for the undertaking and expected to make money by it, and after a few months he was replaced by David Masson, who in

his turn, after a few months' trial, and for the same reason, resigned the editorship. 'The Reader' had grievously deteriorated and had lost all the strength it possessed in the days of its brilliant commencement before April 7, 1866, when the price was reduced to twopence, and there was no cause for regret in its death on July 28 in the same year.

A more cautious and at the same time more ambitious effort at cultured literary journalism was begun three years later, on October 9, 1869, when the first number of 'The Academy' appeared as 'a monthly record of literature, learning, science, and art.' After January 1871 it was issued fortnightly, and in January 1874 it was converted into a weekly paper, the price being lowered from sixpence to fourpence. Its projector, and editor till his death in 1879, at the age of thirty-eight, was Charles Edward Cutts Birch Appleton, a genuine student and an enthusiast in the cause of learning, of refined taste and æsthetic sympathies, but inclined to scholastic pedantry and—as the name he chose for the paper implied—to academic arrogance. 'A critical journal,' he said, 'was demanded which should neither praise indiscriminately nor blame from pique or prejudice, one on which the general reader might rely for guidance through the waste of superficial and ephemeral literature by which he is surrounded, and through which he has neither time nor perhaps the ability to guide himself; a journal which should systematically survey the European literary and scientific movement as a whole, and pass judgment upon books not from an insular, still less from a partisan, but from a cosmopolitan point of view; a journal, lastly, in which only permanent works of taste and real additions to knowledge should be taken into account, and in which the honesty and competence of the reviewer should be

vouched for by his signature.’¹ Formidable signatures were appended to some of the articles in the first number—those, namely, of Matthew Arnold, Sidney Colvin, T. H. Huxley, John Lubbock, Mark Pattison, and John Conington ; and these and many other scores of writers contributed, more or less abundantly, to the subsequent numbers during Appleton’s nine and a half years’ editorship, and afterwards. ‘The Academy’ prospered enough to live, though the anxieties incident to it are considered to have caused the premature death of its estimable conductor, and its influence on modern culture is not to be measured by the extent of its circulation ; but it failed, partly through faults in its plan, to achieve the pre-eminence it aimed at.

One of the functions proposed for itself at starting by ‘The Academy’ was usurped and skilfully performed by a friendly rival, only a month later in the field. ‘Nature,’ commenced on November 4, 1869, gave remarkable evidence of the demand that had arisen for sound yet popular information on scientific affairs, and of the philosophical yet practical way in which that demand could be met. Its editor, Norman Lockyer, who had come to the front as a scientific journalist in the columns of ‘The Reader,’ and who had since done much other work, was well suited for his post, and he had invaluable help from Charles Darwin, Huxley, Stanley Jevons, Lubbock, Roscoe, Tyndall, and nearly every one else able to speak intelligibly and with authority on matters of special research and general knowledge. ‘Nature’ soon became, and has since continued to be, the recognised channel for the communication to the public of new discoveries and fresh criticisms by capable inquirers in nearly every branch of physical research, and even more than that.

¹ *Academy*, October 22, 1870.

'The Athenæum' profited by the competition it had to face. Matters were not mended under Hepworth Dixon's sway, but after the death, in 1869, of the first Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke, son of the Dilke who had become its sole proprietor in 1830, a great reformation took place, the new proprietor having an able assistant in Norman MacColl, who succeeded Hepworth Dixon as editor. Some old writers were parted with, and a great many fresh contributors were found. While special departments, such as science, art, music and the drama, were of necessity entrusted to regular hands, indeed, the reviewing of books, now more than ever the principal business of 'The Athenæum,' was distributed over a very large staff, the plan being to assign each work to a writer familiar with its subject and competent to deal with it intelligently, but rigidly to exclude personal favouritism or prejudice, and to secure as much impartiality as possible. The rule of anonymity has been more carefully observed in 'The Athenæum' than in most other papers. Its authority as a literary censor is not lessened, however, and is in some respects increased, by the fact that the paper itself, and not any particular critic of great or small account, is responsible for the verdicts passed in its columns.

Of some other, and very extensive, developments in various lines of class journalism since 1861, it is not necessary, or possible, here to say much. Each, to be adequately dealt with, would claim a long chapter to itself; and of the merits and demerits, the aims and achievements, of the numerous competitors or associates in several groups, it would be rash for an outsider to speak. So it is particularly with the religious newspapers, of which more than a hundred have appeared, representing different sections of opinion within the limits of the Church of England, and among dissenters

from it, since 'The Record' was started in 1828 ; with the organs of the naval and military, the legal and the medical professions ; and with the numberless trade organs, of which some, like 'Iron,' an outgrowth of 'The Mechanics' Magazine,' which was started in 1823, and 'The Builder,' dating from 1842, are of long standing and wide repute, while others, like 'The Hair-dressers' Weekly Journal,' commenced in 1881, and 'The Shoe and Leather Record,' commenced in 1886, are of recent origin and narrow scope.

Among commercial and financial journals, 'The Economist' has had many rivals since 1861. The first of importance was 'The Money Market Review,' begun in 1862, which, dealing more exclusively with monetary affairs, left 'The Economist' in undisputed possession of the questions of broad commercial policy, and of its political connections, to which it had all along paid great attention. 'The Bullionist' followed in 1866, 'The Financier' in 1870, and 'Money' in 1872. By this time every daily and nearly every weekly paper of general politics had come to pay close attention to city concerns, and especially to the operations of the Stock Exchange ; but few of them were free from suspicion of making improper use of their opportunities for propping up unstable companies and promoting risky speculations. 'The Times' was, during some years, particularly notorious and obnoxious for this offence, which, gross as it was, was not easily to be prevented, seeing that editors and proprietors, if they were themselves proof against temptations to serve personal friends, and to accept comfortable bribes through roundabout and specious agencies, were at the mercy, so long as they retained them, of the clever writers whom they employed. 'The Times' was partly relieved of the scandal attached to it in this way by the dismissal of its very

unworthy city editor, in 1874, and one of Labouchere's earliest and most successful achievements, while he was writing on such affairs in 'The World,' was his indignant denunciation of this culprit, though that was not done till after he had been made aware of the intended change. There was great need of such a crusade against dishonest financiers and their jackals as Labouchere entered upon, and what he and others following him did was useful in many ways ; but the crusaders' virtue was lessened by the fact that many of them even were open to dangerous influences, and in the way of being prompted by considerations of self-interest. It was with the view of giving really honest and well-grounded information and opinions on financial affairs, and of discussing cognate matters in an impartial spirit, that in 1878 Robert Giffen started 'The Statist,' which since then has been the principal rival of 'The Economist.' In 1884 'The Financial News' was commenced as the first daily record of monetary events, 'The Financier' only appearing on five days in the week.

Sports and amusements of all sorts are now looked after by nearly as many special journals as are serious pursuits and business concerns. Here, as in the case of trade and finance, the ground has always been touched upon, and sometimes freely traversed, by the general newspapers, as part of the miscellaneous information required by their readers ; and several of the papers devoted to what are sports and amusements to the majority are more or less in the nature of trade journals for those whose business it is to entertain others. But these pleasure papers constitute a distinct and important group, in which divers kinds of pleasure-taking are severally represented, with more or less aggregation and confusion of different interests.

'The Field,' on the score of dignity, though not of

age, ranks first in the list. This 'country gentleman's newspaper,' started in 1843, was one of many with which Bradbury and Evans were connected, both as printers and as proprietors. Its earliest editor was Mark Lemon, and Leech supplied illustrations of hunting adventure. One of its owners was Benjamin Webster, the actor, who in time acquired the whole property, not then lucrative, and by him it was sold to Serjeant Cox, in whose hands 'The Law Times' had proved very successful, and who soon afterwards included 'The Queen' in his well-managed and profitable newspaper-producing establishment. 'The Field' soon became a comprehensive repository of information on every sort of rural pastime, treating of agricultural matters and natural history, as well as of hunting, shooting, coursing, fishing, racing, yachting, cricket, and other occupations, and recording foreign experiences and observations along with interesting and noteworthy occurrences at home. Edited and subedited by men competent to deal satisfactorily with the various sections of the paper, and not stinted in its arrangements for collecting accurate information, it came to be indispensable in every country house, and as such its advertising connection ensured its further success. It left room, however, for many competitors, the chief of which, in more serious directions, were 'The Sporting Gazette,' commenced in 1862, and converted into 'The County Gentleman' in 1880; 'Land and Water,' commenced in 1866, and 'The Fishing Gazette,' commenced in 1877.

Older than 'The Field,' and for a long time supreme as an authority upon one class of aristocratic and popular amusement, was 'Bell's Life in London,' itself an outgrowth from 'Bell's Weekly Messenger,' and 'The Weekly Dispatch,' both of which had been started by the same proprietor. 'Bell's Messenger,' dating from

1796, had led the way as a chronicle of agricultural affairs and all matters incidental thereto, and its prosperity had induced the establishment, in 1801, of 'The Weekly Dispatch,' intended to deal with politics in general, and particularly with pugilism and the kindred sports patronised by George IV., before he was king, and all his friends. During twenty years 'The Dispatch' was the leading representative of the prize-ring, with Radicalism in politics as one of its minor features. It acquired political importance, however, and in 1822 its pugilistic connection was directed into a new channel, 'Bell's Life in London' being then established, and almost exclusively devoted to that branch of journalism. 'The Era,' commenced in 1838, mainly as a weekly organ of the licensed victuallers, and supplementary to 'The Morning Advertiser,' paid considerable attention to sporting affairs, as also did several other papers; but 'Bell's Life' held its ground against all rivals, following the fashion in giving prominence to horse-racing as an occasion for betting, when that began to supersede pugilism, until 1859. In that year George Maddick and S. O. Beeton assisted in the production of a 'Penny Bell's Life,' which, edited by Henry M. Feist, known as Augur, and a great authority in the sporting world, soon proved a formidable opponent of the high-priced veteran whose title it had appropriated. A law-suit ensued, and the proprietors of 'Bell's Life' succeeded in suppressing the piracy; but they could not suppress the paper. Appearing on Wednesdays and Saturdays as 'The Sporting Life,' the new publication thrived so well that in April 1881 it began to be issued four days a week, and in March 1883 it was converted into a daily paper. After struggling vainly against this rivalry during many years, 'Bell's Life' succumbed in May 1886, when it was merged in 'The Sporting Life.'

All branches of what is known as sport, in the contracted and technical use of the term—that is, horse-racing, coursing, pedestrianism, rowing, swimming, cricket, pugilism, and other athletic exercises, both on their own account and as opportunities for betting—being dealt with in ‘The Sporting Life’ much more copiously than by its forerunners, it had in 1865 to face the opposition of two new papers, ‘The Sportsman’ and ‘The Sporting Times.’ In ‘The Sportsman’ special attention was given to horse-racing in its betting relations, one of its innovations being the reporting, not merely of races and of the condition of horses from the time of their being entered for particular races, but of the training of the animals from the commencement of their careers. In this way something like a reform was effected in gambling operations. A semblance of honesty was introduced into the business, and it was no longer possible for the public to be beguiled into speculating upon animals about which nothing was known. A fresh, and in other respects unhealthy impetus, however, was thus given to ‘sport’; and its training reports became such an attractive feature in ‘The Sportsman’ that, at first issued thrice a week, it was able to be converted into a daily paper in March 1876, seven years before ‘The Sporting Life.’ ‘The Sporting Times’ has continued to be only a Saturday paper, and has thriven less upon its racing news than upon its profusion of coarse and scurrilous scraps of tittle-tattle, representing ‘society journalism’ in its most degraded form. Another paper, ‘The Sporting Clipper,’ finding its special business in the giving of ‘tips,’ was started in 1872, and many others followed at later dates, some to be short-lived, both in London and in the provinces. It is a more curious than agreeable fact that, besides receiving more or less attention from nearly every

general newspaper, 'sport' should have so many prosperous journals exclusively devoted to it.

Another important section of class journalism has to do with theatrical affairs, although for guidance and information about new plays outsiders look rather to the ordinary newspapers than to the organs of 'the profession,' as it calls itself. Though not so intended when it was commenced, 'The Era' had come to be such an organ long before 1862, and it stood almost alone until 1869, when the rise of music-halls in public favour led to the establishment of 'The Entr'acte' as the chronicler and exponent of their productions. 'The Stage' followed in 1881, 'The Topical Times' in 1883, and 'The Dramatic Review'—more ambitious in its style and more independent in its aims—in 1885.

It is somewhat strange that 'The Weekly Dispatch,' of which 'Bell's Life in London' was an offshoot in 1822, should have had another, and a not altogether dissimilar, offshoot more than half a century later. The fame of Henry Sampson as a sporting critic, writing for several years as Pendragon in 'The Dispatch,' led to the establishment of 'The Referee,' under his editorship, on bold and original lines, in 1877. Primarily a sporting paper, containing 'Sporting Notions' by Pendragon, 'Turf Notes and Anticipations' by other hands, and a full report for Sunday reading of the latest news in every branch of sport, 'The Referee' also furnished notices of Saturday night performances at the theatres, and four or five columns of 'Dramatic and Musical Gossip' on the occurrences of the previous week-days. Political and social affairs, moreover, were discussed in one or two leading articles in each number, and a special attraction was a three-column assortment of 'Mustard and Cress,' dealing humorously with all sorts of contemporary concerns, great and small, by George R.

Sims, writing as Dagonet. The paper thus gave, in its eight crowded pages, for a penny, comments on political as well as on sporting and theatrical matters, and joined with them some of the liveliest functions of 'society journalism' and of the professedly comic sheets. Its criticisms on all questions were singularly outspoken and independent, and, while more rollicking in its wit, though at the same time more refined, and certainly more honest, than most of the publications with which in various respects it competed, 'The Referee' stood almost quite alone, with the exception of 'Truth,' in its Radicalism. Treading each week, in every column, on dangerous ground, it incurred some actions for libel, and on one occasion was mulcted in heavy damages ; but the novelty and vigour with which it was conducted speedily secured for it a large circulation, and a position of great authority on the questions with which it particularly dealt.

There is yet another variety of class journalism to be referred to. Most of the papers published in London, though giving more or less prominence to metropolitan news, concern themselves so much with political and other affairs of general interest, that they fail to satisfy local requirements ; and to meet these requirements special papers, corresponding in some respects to the provincial journals in their original plans and purposes, have been established. 'The City Press,' started in 1857, was not the earliest London local paper ; and a few others of older date still exist, 'The Hammersmith Observer' and 'The South London Journal,' for instance, having been commenced in 1855. 'The City Press,' however, now published twice a week, stands foremost among about twelve dozen local papers issued in the metropolis or its immediate suburbs. Ably conducted in many respects, it is the champion of the

London corporation, and of 'vested interests' in general, and therefore obnoxious to the reformers, in whose interests 'The Citizen' was established, as a weekly paper, in 1877. Of smaller influence than either of these is 'The Metropolitan,' which in 1872 appeared as a supporter of the Metropolitan Board of Works, and a chronicler of the proceedings of other local bodies, and with it may be ranked 'The School Board Chronicle,' its senior by a year. Some of the suburban papers, such as 'The South London Press,' 'The Marylebone Mercury,' 'The East London Observer,' and 'The Richmond and Twickenham Times,' are as enterprising as were the best of the provincial papers a generation ago. Politics, however, if dealt with at all in such papers, are perforce made subservient to minor interests.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ANTIQUITIES AND NOVELTIES.

1874—1886.

THE latest stage in the political history of newspapers dates from the general election of 1874—not the first that was held after the passing of the Reform Act of 1867, which had considerably altered the distribution of power among the various sections of the community, but the first after the changed conditions of parliamentary work had been apprehended by the electorate, and after the constituencies had had opportunities of judging both how that work had been done and how it should have been done. ‘For nearly five years,’ Disraeli wrote to Lord Grey, in October 1873, ‘the present ministers have harassed every trade, worried every profession, and assailed or menaced every class, institution, and species of property in the country. Occasionally they have varied this state of civil warfare by perpetrating some job which outraged public opinion, or by stumbling into mistakes which have been always discreditable and sometimes ruinous. All this they call a policy, and seem quite proud of it; but the country has, I think, made up its mind to close this career of plundering and blundering.’ In those strictures there was not only gross exaggeration, but, except in the last particular, manifest untruth. ‘The country,’ however, was of Disraeli’s opinion. At the general election of 1868 the Liberal majority in the House of Commons had been 115.

When Disraeli wrote it had dwindled down to less than fifty, and Gladstone's Irish University Bill was defeated by a majority of three. At the general election of February 1874 the Conservative majority was forty-six.

The newspapers did much to bring about this result. Among the London morning journals 'The Daily News' and 'The Daily Telegraph' had been almost alone in strenuous support of the closing acts and proposals of the Gladstone administration. The independent organs of Radicalism had been nearly as outspoken as the Tory organs in condemning many features of its policy. There was a rallying of the Liberal forces when the constituencies were called upon to decide whether Gladstone should be retained in office or should be superseded by Disraeli. But only those who were more loyal to men than to measures, who preferred partisanship to principle, could put much zeal into their efforts; and, on the other hand, a large part of the press was pledged to the assistance of class interests that the expiring government had assailed and to the encouragement of grievances it had created. 'The Morning Advertiser' was by no means the only newspaper that fought fiercely under the banner of 'Beer and the Bible,' but it was just now, for the first and last time in its history, nearly the most powerful journal in England. It must be remembered, too, that though the provincial papers were rapidly gaining ground, they were, with but few exceptions, as yet only struggling into strength. The London papers still dominated the country, and not many of them were heartily Gladstonian.

The chances of Liberal cohesion and revival, in the newspaper world as well as in parliament, were weakened by Gladstone's abdication of the leadership of the party, informally notified in his letter to Lord Granville in March 1874, immediately after the verdict had been

given against him at the general election, and formally consummated, as it was thought, in February 1875, after a year of disorganisation and turmoil. All sections of Liberals, except the candidates for promotion in each, agreed in deprecating and deploring his retirement; but idle lamentation, as usual, did not promote vigour. The party was not brought into a healthy or compact condition when, with Lord Granville as titular head, the differences as to the respective claims to leadership in the House of Commons were smoothed over at Gladstone's bidding by the selection of Lord Hartington in preference to Sir William Harcourt, Forster, or Goschen; and newspaper editors who looked to their party chiefs for guidance were unable to follow out any consistent and important lines of policy. Toryism in general, and Tory journalism in particular, gained by this Liberal confusion.

The confusion was useful, however, in so far as it allowed or compelled the journalists to think more for themselves and encouraged in many a spirit of independence, which increased their influence upon intelligent readers. So it was especially outside of London. The country newspapers, rising in circulation every year, acquired more and more value. Freed from the overpowering weight of metropolitan opinion, each great provincial town became a political as well as a commercial or industrial metropolis for its own district, and had efficient political instruction, not merely on local affairs but also in views on imperial questions, more or less modified by local considerations, from such newspapers as 'The Manchester Guardian' and 'The Liverpool Daily Post,' 'The Scotsman' and 'The Glasgow Herald,' 'The Leeds Mercury' and 'The Newcastle Chronicle,' 'The Birmingham Daily Post' and 'The Western Morning News.'

The troubles in south-eastern Europe, commencing in July 1875 with the insurrection in Herzegovina, and culminating in the war between Russia and Turkey, which began in April 1877, gave new life to Liberal newspapers, especially in London, and to political journalism of all sorts. Every leading paper had several correspondents distributed over the disturbed districts, and received from them each day long reports of stirring events there, which not only were of absorbing interest to their readers, but also supplied ample materials for forcible leading articles. Gladstone, coming back from his retirement, took the lead in a great popular movement, which restrained the Conservative administration from active participation in the war, and secured the recognition of some long-despised principles of international duty and policy. Though the now apparently reunited Liberal party and the journalists in its service were able to do little in controlling the government, the way was being steadily prepared for the great change that occurred when the time came for another parliament to be elected. In all this controversy the part played by journalists was considerable, and perhaps at no previous time had their influence been so great. The influence was not all in one direction, however, and though the balance of strength was on the Liberal side, the contending forces were about evenly matched in numbers.

Not for the first time in its ninety years' career, but more curiously than on most previous occasions, 'The Times' wavered between the two sides. 'We have got into a pretty mess,' Gladstone wrote to Abraham Hayward on October 10, 1876. "'The Times'" appears to be thoroughly emasculated. It does not pay to read a paper which next week is sure to refute what it has demonstrated this week. It ought to be prohibited to change sides more than a certain number of

times in a year. As to the upper ten thousand'—for whom, of course, 'The Times' chiefly wrote—'it has not been by the majority of that body that any of the great and good measures of our century have been carried, though a minority have done good service.' 'After reading "The Times" of to-day,' Hayward replied on the following morning, 'you will be tempted to improve on your proposal and prohibit them from changing sides more than once in twenty-four hours. The first article is anti-Russian, and the second still more decidedly anti-Turk.'¹

There was some excuse for the infirmities of 'The Times' in those days. Though not yet sixty, Delane had been in harness, as its editor, for five-and-thirty years, and could not but be worn out by his arduous labours. What those labours were, and how he strove to perform them, we may infer from the apology offered by a friend of Delane's after his death. 'An editor, it has often been said, sometimes not very seriously, must know everything,' we read. 'He must, at least, never be found at fault, and must be always equal to the occasion as to the personal characteristics, the concerns, the acts and utterances of those who are charged with the government of this great empire. But this is only one of many points, some even more difficult, because more special and more apt to lie for a time out of the scope of ordinary vigilance. With a large class of critics a small mistake counts as a large one, but everybody is liable to make mistakes, and an editor labours under the additional danger of too readily accepting the words of writers, some of whom will always be too full of ideas to pay needful attention to such matters. These are days of blue-books, of enormous correspondence, of tabular returns, of statistics twisted into every

¹ *Correspondence of Abraham Hayward*, vol. ii. p. 267.

possible form, of averages and differences—always on supposition—to be carefully remembered, of numerical comparisons everybody challenges if they are not in his own favour, and of statements that, if they possess the least novelty or other interest, are sure to be picked to pieces. It frequently happens that a long night's work has to be thrown away, including many carefully revised columns of printed matter, to make room for an overgrown parliamentary debate, a budget of important despatches, or a speech made in the provinces. Often has it been said at two in the morning that a very good paper has been printed and destroyed to make way for a paper that few will read—none, perhaps, except a few parliamentary gentlemen looking out for passages which, if they don't read well, must have been incorrectly reported. As an instance of what may happen to an editor, the quarterly return of the revenue once came with an enormous error—an addition instead of subtraction, or *vice versâ*. The writer who had to comment on it jotted down the principal figures and the totals, which were unexpected, and returned the original for the printers. It was not till an hour after midnight that, on a sight of the return in print, the error was perceived, and corrected, without a word of remark, by the paper. Of course the comments had to be rewritten and carefully secured from error. The work of an editor can only be appreciated by those who have had the fortune to have some little experience of it. The editor of a London daily newspaper is held answerable for every word in forty-eight and sometimes sixty columns. The merest slip of the pen, an epithet too much, a wrong date, a name misspelt or a wrong initial before it, a mistake as to some obscure personage only too glad to seize the opportunity of showing himself, the misinterpretation of

some passage perhaps incapable of interpretation, the most trifling offence to the personal or national susceptibility of those who do not even profess to care for the feelings of others, may prove not only disagreeable but even costly mistakes ; but they are among the least to which an editor is liable. As it is impossible to say what a night may bring forth, and the most important intelligence is apt to be the latest, it will often find him with none to share his responsibility, his colleagues being either pre-engaged on other matters or no longer at hand. The editor must be on the spot till the paper is sent to press, and make decisions on which not only the approval of the British public, but great events, and even great causes, may hang. All the more serious part of his duties has to be discharged at the end of a long day's work, a day of interruptions and conversations, of letter-reading and letter-writing, when mind and body are not what they were twelve hours ago, and wearied nature is putting in her gentle pleas. An editor cannot husband his strength for the night's battle by comparative repose in the solitude of a study or the freshness of green fields. He must see the world, converse with its foremost or busiest actors, be open to information, and on guard against error. All this ought to be borne in mind by those who complain that journalism is not infallibly accurate, just, and agreeable. Their complaints are like those of the court lord who found fault with the disagreeable necessities of warfare.' ¹

Delane can hardly have been subjected to such an intolerable strain as those words imply ; but his responsibilities were stupendous—hardly less, or less complicated and various, than those of a prime minister, and he bore them through all the bustling years from

¹ *Times*, November 22, 1879.

1841 to 1877. Required both to follow public opinion in seeming to lead it and to lead in seeming to follow it, always to conserve as much as he could whether professing to be Liberal or Conservative, and always to favour, as Gladstone said, 'the upper ten thousand' as against the millions, it was inevitable that the rare, almost unexampled, capacities Delane possessed for the editing of a great newspaper should deteriorate in the course of so long a term, and that the faults with which he started, but which were merits in the eyes of those he served as conductor of 'The Times,' should increase with years. Few men had seen so much, or done so much for good and for evil, and none had ever seen or done so much in connection with the progress of journalism as he when he died, at the age of sixty-two, on November 22, 1879. A memorable company of writers and workers on 'The Times'—Thomas Chenery, Leonard Courtney, James Caird, Henry Reeve, John C. Macdonald, and many others—were gathered together on December 1, when the venerable Lord Sidney Godolphin Osborne, the S. G. O. of a quarter of a century before, read the service at his burial.¹

Two years earlier, in October 1877, Delane had retired from the editorship of 'The Times.' His successor was Thomas Chenery, less known to the public as a journalist than as a member of the Old Testament Revision Committee of the Convocation of Canterbury, professor of Arabic at the university of Oxford, translator of 'The Assemblies' by El Hariry, and learned editor of Jehudah Ben Shelomo Alkharizi's 'Machberoth Ithiel.' All Chenery's oriental studies, however, had been incidental or supplementary to his work on 'The Times.' He had been its correspondent

¹ *Times*, December 2, 1879.

in Constantinople during the Crimean war ; and after that he had been a constant writer on various subjects for the paper.

Opinions differed as to his fitness to succeed Delane. 'Chenery, the new editor, has just called, and we had a long talk,' Hayward, now a frequent contributor, wrote on December 12, 1877. 'I like him very much. I think he will make "The Times" all it should be.'¹ 'Lord Beaconsfield,' with whom Yates was conversing at Brighton, 'said he had heard "that he held a chair of Arabic somewhere," but did not consider that a very essential qualification for the editor of "The Times." I ventured to traverse this statement,' Yates adds, 'and told him that Mr. Chenery was an excellent journalist, and had twenty years' experience of the traditions of Printing House Square. "But is he versed in social diplomacy like Mr. Delane? That is an important part of his duties," said Lord Beaconsfield.'²

Since 'The Times' had become a convert to his foreign policy, if not to all his tactics on home affairs, Lord Beaconsfield had learned to think more highly than in former days both of Delane and of the social diplomacy in which Delane had excelled, and he had not much reason to complain of the tone of the paper after the change in the editorship. 'The Times' under Chenery, after some wavering, was more energetic and consistent in its advocacy of Beaconsfieldian views than it had been, and it fell altogether out of sympathy with Liberal movements. In these years there were some important changes in its staff. Leonard Courtney, one of its principal leader writers since 1864, and other staunch Liberals gave place to newer men, among them being E. D. J. Wilson, whose opinions, on Irish questions

¹ *Correspondence of Abraham Hayward*, vol. ii. p. 287.

² Yates, *Recollections and Experiences*, vol. ii. p. 139.

especially, were in accord with those which, on grounds of principle or of expediency, were now selected for vehement utterance in the paper. "The Times" seems to have taken a turn towards fury,' Gladstone wrote in September 1878, 'an amusing variation. There have been few duller newspapers for the last three years, and they seem to wish to rival Delane in his decay.'¹

Nor was Gladstone satisfied at this time with 'The Daily News.' 'I think,' he said in the letter just quoted from, 'they have often made improper admissions, and do not drive the nail home as it ought to be done by a really vigorous opposition paper, such as "The Morning Chronicle" of Perry.' Yet from 'The Daily News' Gladstone and the opposition obtained all the support that could be given, under the earnest if somewhat cynical editorship of Frank H. Hill, by the flowing rhetoric of Justin McCarthy, the indefatigable partisanship of P. W. Clayden, and other assistance from a staff in which were included William Black, George Saintsbury, Henry W. Lucy, and many other able writers. Perhaps it was impossible for any particular nails to be driven home with sufficient vigour when two of the proprietors of 'The Daily News' were men with as strong and diverse individualities as Samuel Morley and Henry Labouchere. The paper had to be made acceptable both to orthodox and zealous dissenters and to men who regarded life as a game and politics as only a form of gambling.

There was bolder and, to many readers, more persuasive writing in 'The Daily Telegraph'; but 'The Telegraph' was now more anti-Gladstonian than 'The Times.' With the shifting of premiers Gladstone-worship had given place to Disraeli-worship, and in Edwin Arnold and his colleagues the Beaconsfield administra-

¹ *Correspondence of Abraham Hayward*, vol. ii. p. 298.

tion had enthusiastic supporters. Its ablest champion, however, being both genuine and discriminating, was 'The Standard,' which, strong before, gained fresh strength from a change in the management in 1876.

James Johnson, who, on becoming its proprietor in 1857, had practically made a new paper of 'The Standard,' died in 1876, appointing as its sole and irremovable controller William Henry Mudford, the son of the old editor of 'The Courier' and other papers, who had for some time been a writer on its staff. Mudford straightway proceeded to further improve the paper, and to make it, not less honestly Conservative than before, but too independent and consistent in its politics to please either the timeservers or the irreconcilables of the party. At one time, indeed, some of these irreconcilables were so indignant at the plain-speaking of 'The Standard' that they threatened to take proceedings in the Court of Chancery in the hope of upsetting the arrangement under which Mudford acted as trustee of the property. The threats came to nothing, however, and Mudford continued to edit the paper in such ways as he deemed best for its interests and for the interests of progressive Conservatism. The Beaconsfield government, while it lasted, was zealously but intelligently supported. When Gladstone returned to power, his measures were closely criticised, and whenever they seemed objectionable, zealously opposed; but Mudford's aim was to be guided by principle, not by party whim, and, avoiding all factiousness, to be as steady and impartial as he could be in enforcing the views that he held to be patriotic.

'The Standard' has flourished, and the party has been well served, by perseverance in those lines. With George Byrom Curtis as his chief assistant in the editorship, Mudford has had as his principal leader writers

T. H. S. Escott, while his health allowed, Alfred Austin, and T. E. Kebbel, other help coming from Colonel Brackenbury, Demetrius Boulger, Frances Power Cobbe, Sutherland Edwards, Dr. Robert Brown, and many more, and especially, as city editor, from Alexander Wilson, a great authority on all matters of finance, and a fearless exposé of unsafe speculations. In Hely Bowes and Dr. Abel, 'The Standard' has had Paris and Berlin correspondents of exceptional ability and trustworthiness, and in its special correspondence during and since the Russo-Turkish war, it has shown more enterprise than even 'The Daily News.' The list of its special correspondents includes the names of J. A. Cameron, who was killed in the Soudan, Professor Palmer, who was murdered by the Arabs, Frederick Boyle, and G. A. Henty.

An attempt to supersede 'The Standard' had been made by seceders from its staff, and had failed, before Mudford took charge of it. David Morier Evans, who, previously connected with 'The Times,' had been city editor of 'The Morning Herald' and 'The Standard' since 1857, started 'The Hour' in March 1873, taking with him Captain Hamber as political editor. The speculation was altogether disastrous, however, and after Evans had worried himself to death and others had lost much money over it, it was abandoned in 1876. Another and an almost amusing venture in Tory journalism was 'The Daily Express,' commenced on May 1, 1877, and concluded on August 25 in the same year. In the last number it was stated that it had been started 'as an experiment, and with only sufficient capital to try the experiment, whether there was a demand for a church paper, conducted on church principles, and designed for the perusal of churchmen.'

More fortunate was 'The Daily Chronicle,' which first appeared as a political penny paper on May 28,

1877, but with noteworthy antecedents. 'The Business and Agency Gazette' had been started in January 1855 as a weekly sheet, containing nothing but advertisements and given away to residents in Clerkenwell, as it was hoped that the advertisements would defray the expenses of publishing and yield a profit. This hope not being realised, the little paper was in the following May converted into 'The Clerkenwell News,' and sold for a halfpenny, some scraps of local intelligence being added to the advertisements. It was thus the first of the London district newspapers, and in its altered form it answered so well that in the course of the next ten years it was gradually increased in size, furnished with a larger quantity of news, and issued more frequently. It appeared successively twice, thrice, four times, and five times a week, until in April 1866 it became a daily paper, the price being generally a halfpenny, except when a penny was charged for double numbers. The title had in February 1866 been altered to 'The Clerkenwell News and London Times,' the 'London Times' being printed in small type till the autumn of 1869, when the 'Times' was brought out so boldly that the proprietor of 'The Times' protested. The paper was, therefore, re-named, and it appeared during the next six years as 'The London Daily Chronicle and Clerkenwell News.' Through all these changes it prospered. The charge for short advertisements being very low, it obtained plenty of them, and had a large circulation extending all over London, and in 1876 it was so valuable as a commercial property that Edward Lloyd, the founder of 'Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper,' bought it for 30,000*l.*, with the object of further expanding it into a rival of the regular newspapers already in existence. That was done as soon as Hoe machines could be obtained from New York and set up in the

reconstructed premises in Fleet Street; the machines, of an improved kind, being so efficient that 25,000 copies could be printed, cut, folded, and counted in an hour. These arrangements and others that followed, in accordance with Lloyd's resolve—that he would continue to spend upon his new enterprise whatever was necessary during five years without stint—involved an outlay of 125,000*l.* in addition to the purchase-money. The issue justified all this boldness.

'The Daily Chronicle,' edited by Robert Whelan Boyle, and with an adequate staff of writers, so far adhered to its traditions that, securing plenty of advertisements by continuing to insert them at a lower charge than that made by most other daily papers, it paid special attention to metropolitan concerns, both in its reports of news and in its leading articles; but, as was shown by its special correspondence during the Egyptian campaigns, in which Phil Robinson and Charles Williams were its representatives, and on subsequent occasions, it competed zealously in all respects with the other daily papers. Radical at starting, it has only followed the chief current of London opinion in opposing lines of action approved by many Radicals.

The recent turning of currents is notably illustrated in the fortunes of one clever journal and its outcome. 'The Pall Mall Gazette' had been conducted by Frederick Greenwood with great vigour and talent during fifteen years before the spring of 1880. It had drawn to itself some of the best writers of 'The Saturday Review,' which it imitated and often improved upon in the brilliance and pungency of its well thought-out articles on literary, scientific, artistic, and other subjects, as well as on political questions. In politics it was as independent, and aimed at being as impartial, as it was in its handling of other concerns. It de-

clined to be called Conservative, and was frequently at variance with the Tory party ; but it always regarded with suspicion, if not with aversion, not only Gladstone and the steady supporters of his administration between 1868 and 1874, but also its Radical critics, whether of the school of Cobden or of the school of Mill. On all questions of foreign policy especially it was 'anti-Radical,' its editor's views thereon coinciding with those of one of the ablest of his early contributors, Percy William Smythe, afterwards Lord Strangford. Steadily insisting on the observance of all our 'imperial responsibilities' in relation to other nations, to India and our colonies, 'The Pall Mall' on this latter ground particularly became more and more opposed to Gladstonian opinion, and more and more in agreement with the Beaconsfield administration. So anti-Russian, that it was considered by many to be Turcophil, it approved and encouraged all Lord Beaconsfield's proceedings, and came to be recognised as the most outspoken and thoroughgoing of the 'Jingo' organs. In these ways Greenwood fell out of harmony with the proprietary of 'The Pall Mall,' and when, at the time of the general election in April 1880, which gave the Liberals a majority of fifty over both Conservatives and Home Rulers, the ownership of the paper was transferred from George Smith to his son-in-law, Henry Yates Thompson, a change of editorship became necessary. The number for May 1 contained the announcement that 'Mr. Frederick Greenwood, who has had the editorial direction of "The Pall Mall Gazette" since the date of its first publication till now, will not be responsible for any political opinions that may appear in its pages after to-day.' 'One short month ago we were a discomfited little company of writers, with reek intolerable smoked out of our ancient quarters,' was the

less graceful statement made in the first number of 'The St. James's Gazette,' which Greenwood produced on May 31.

The personal quarrel that led to the starting of a new paper which was in all essentials a continuance of 'The Pall Mall Gazette' with an altered title, and quickened to fresh energy by its competition with the appropriator of its former name, was in itself interesting to outsiders ; but more important were its political bearings. In 'The St. James's Gazette' Greenwood, H. D. Traill, Adam Gielgud, and all the other able writers whom he took with him from Northumberland Street to Dorset Street, were as brilliant and pungent as ever, and they were certainly more 'anti-Radical,' which—intolerance being the rule with those who in our later days have arrogated to themselves the title of Radical, and all independence in thought or action being intolerable to them—was regarded by those they opposed as an equivalent term to Tory. 'The St. James's Gazette,' however, persevered in the lines it had marked out for itself, and with signal success. It was a trenchant, if often too indignant and ungenerous, critic of the second Gladstone administration through its five years' life, opposing the Conservatives as zealously as the Liberals when it saw occasion for doing so, and has been a powerful factor in the political settlements and unsettlements that have taken place or have been in process since it was started.

In the editorship of 'The Pall Mall Gazette' Greenwood was succeeded by John Morley, whose early Radical work on 'The Morning Star,' when he was a disciple of Cobden, and yet more on 'The Fortnightly Review,' when he was a disciple of Mill, had marked him out as a mighty journalistic champion of Radicalism. Even when he was writing for 'The

Saturday Review,' and not out of sympathy with its vigorous upholding of orthodox opinions and institutions in politics and religion, Morley had been discovered by Mill as a bold thinker with singular skill in the expression of his thoughts, and Mill had helped him in the way of enlightenment; and when, some fifteen years later, he became editor of 'The Pall Mall,' his broadened experience, extended observation, and thorough mastery of the arts of authorship, had qualified him to be a statesman among journalists. 'The Pall Mall' in his hands was a vehement and forcible exponent of most of the views on home and foreign policy, on domestic reform and international duty, which had been put forward by Gladstone in his Midlothian speeches, and by Bright, Fawcett, Chamberlain, Dilke, and others, and to which, with Chamberlain and Bright in the cabinet, and Fawcett and Dilke holding important posts outside it, it was reasonably expected that due effect would be given. The new government, however, disappointed those who had hoped most from it, especially by its despotic treatment of the Irish, its aggravation of foreign complications, and its postponement of nearly all the reforms it was pledged to undertake; and it was not easy for a consistent Radical to conduct a newspaper which was designed to be a ministerial organ. There were other reasons, besides his undertaking the arduous duties of a member of parliament in February 1883, for Morley's retirement from the editorship of 'The Pall Mall,' and after that, William Thomas Stead succeeding to the office, it entered on a new career.

Stead had been for some years editor of 'The Northern Echo,' an enterprising and very successful halfpenny morning paper started in Darlington in 1869 as the first of the provincial imitators of the London

'Echo,' before he was appointed sub-editor of 'The Pall Mall' under Morley. The opinions he had arrived at as to the proper functions and methods of journalism, in dealing with political and all other matters, if not altogether original or much more than revivals or adaptations of very old-fashioned arrangements and hitherto more approved in the United States than in England, were promptly introduced into 'The Pall Mall' as soon as he had full control over it. 'Interviewing,' long common with foreign correspondents, and cautiously adopted nearer home in such series as 'Celebrities at Home,' in 'The World,' was now freely resorted to in the case of any politician, religionist, social reformer, man of science, artist, tradesman, rogue, madman, or any one else, who cared to advertise himself or his projects or pursuits, and in whom the public could be expected to take any interest. The skill in what at first they called 'the Americanisation of English journalism,' but what they afterwards designated as 'the new journalism,' was the boast of both the editor and the proprietor of 'The Pall Mall,' and they boldly applied it alike to national and individual, political and social ends, dressing out their 'interviews' with dramatic or melodramatic, minutely accurate or judiciously imagined details, enforcing them by strongly-worded leading articles, and supplementing them by specially prepared and selected columns of news. They took credit for having, by arousing public opinion at the suitable moment, caused General Gordon to be sent to Khartoum, and for having brought about other grave embarrassments in public affairs. They claimed to have procured or hastened an important change in the law for the protection of young women and children by an elaborate combination of very ugly facts and specious fabrications in a set of articles, un-

examined in their way, entitled 'The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon.' As self-constituted censors of public morals and reckless pursuers of private objects, they dabbled in forthcoming questions for the divorce court and other judicial tribunals, and were lavish in insinuations and innuendoes when the scandalous details they sought for were scanty or had no existence. In these and all such ways they secured for 'The Pall Mall' a considerable reputation which, whether the general effect was good or bad, evidently answered the purpose of the producers; and it must be acknowledged that by other and less questionable devices they increased the popularity of the paper. There was mild precedent for some of the developments of 'the new journalism' in the account of his work-house adventures by 'An Amateur Casual' in one of the earlier numbers of 'The Pall Mall,' as there had been long before in the writings of Charles Dickens, Henry Mayhew, and others, and long before that in the writings of Defoe, Steele, and others; but the merit, such as it is, of a certain amount of originality and novelty is due to these latest travellers in the field of sensationalism.

'The Pall Mall Gazette' and 'The St. James's Gazette,' reducing their prices from twopence to a penny in 1882, came then into more direct competition with 'The Evening Standard' and 'The Globe,' which, however, especially the former, aimed at supplying the readers with a good store of late news rather than with lengthy comments on the events of the day or more miscellaneous matter. 'The Echo,' continuing to be published at a halfpenny and doubled in size, maintained its general character as a vigorous Radical evening journal during several changes of proprietorship. Never a profitable speculation in the hands of its founders, it

was sold by them in 1874 to Albert Grant, who in turn soon transferred it to John Passmore Edwards, the owner of 'The English Mechanic' and other literary property. From him it passed for a short time to Andrew Carnegie, a New York capitalist, who undertook to control a number of 'Echoes' in various parts of the country, but from whom it again reverted to Passmore Edwards, to flourish under his management, notwithstanding the opposition of 'The Evening News,' which was started as a halfpenny rival to it in 1881. Conservative in politics, but otherwise emulating in coarser ways the policy of 'The Pall Mall Gazette,' 'The Evening News' looked chiefly to copious reports of divorce cases and such-like matter for popularity.

The latest of the cheap daily papers in London is the oldest of all in its origin. In 1882 Sir Algernon Borthwick, some twenty years after he became its editor, and about five years after it had become his sole property, and when it had attained the venerable age of a hundred and ten, reduced the price of 'The Morning Post' from threepence to a penny, but without altering its main characteristics as a detailer of 'fashionable intelligence,' combined with zealous Tory partisanship. It became, indeed, under the editorship of William Hardman, who was also chairman of the Surrey sessions, much more of a party organ than it had formerly been, when James Knowles, before he commenced 'The Nineteenth Century,' and Frank Hugh O'Donnell were among its leader writers.

Of the three high-priced weekly papers which paid most attention to political affairs and had most influence in politics, 'The Spectator' and 'The Guardian' were, till 1885, if not always steady supporters of Gladstone's policy, steady opponents of Lord Beaconsfield's. 'The Saturday Review' had long since become as much

of a Tory organ as its claim to be independent of party admitted. But 'The Saturday Review' had lost weight after the death of its singularly able founder, John Douglas Cook. Even its fame and its popularity had, on other than commercial grounds, been injurious to it. Its success as a paper containing an average of twenty pages of original writing led to an increase of size, and to maintain a high standard of work throughout thirty or more pages every week was more than could be expected from Cook's successor, Philip Harwood, or from Walter Pollock, who followed Harwood in the editorship.

More important as evidence of the progress of political opinion in London in recent times than the high-priced weeklies, or even some of the dailies, are its cheap weekly papers. 'The Saturday Review' and 'The Spectator,' 'The Guardian,' 'The Economist,' and many others of the same or kindred varieties, prepared for particular sections of readers, are circulated among those several sections throughout the country, and thus, narrow as they may be in some respects, are in others more or less cosmopolitan. 'The Times,' moreover, and some other London daily papers, in less proportion, also travel far and wide for the use of readers not satisfied with the admirably contrived and comprehensive journals produced in their own districts; but the modern competition has localised them considerably, and very much lessened their value either as an index or as a guide of opinion outside the metropolis. So it is, yet more, with most of the cheap weeklies. Nearly every country town has at least a Saturday paper of its own, giving as much general information and criticism as its subscribers care for or have not easy access to from other sources. In the old days, when there were few or none such, the cheap 'Lloyd's,' the costlier

'Reynolds's,' and, before them, the yet costlier 'Weekly Dispatch,' had, for those times, enormous circulation and immense influence; and relics of these yet remain, though it is significant that the penny London paper which has by far the largest provincial sale is 'The Weekly Budget,' hardly heard of in London, and consisting chiefly of fiction, but with a large assortment of news items, judiciously collected and strung together, with hardly any comment and as little political bias as possible. The extension of political journalism has caused, and is continuing a complete revolution which, with one or two exceptions, affects the cheap weekly press of London more than any other sort of newspaper property. One consequence of the change is that papers of this sort now more exclusively and exactly than before reflect and guide, or should reflect and guide, the opinion of Londoners, and especially of the working classes. Their importance may be inferred from the fact that their aggregate circulation during the past few years has been scarcely less than a million and a half a week.

Among these cheap papers 'Lloyd's Weekly News' takes precedence, both as the first to be sold for a penny and as, partly on that account, the one with by far the largest circulation. Though Douglas Jerrold edited it from 1852 till his death in 1857, 'Lloyd's' only attempted to give a few columns of smart original writing as spice to a carefully prepared epitome of the week's news, with fuller reports of the latest information for Sunday reading; and when Blanchard Jerrold followed his father as editor, with Thomas Catling soon afterwards as sub-editor, yet more attention was paid to news than to political guidance. Before Catling succeeded to the chief control, experience had proved that readers of 'Lloyd's' were well content to have as much

interesting information about recent events as could be crowded into the closely printed pages, with but a small mixture of political teaching, Radical as far as it went. 'Lloyd's' is pre-eminently a popular paper of news, and as such has achieved a success unparalleled in its way.

It has been otherwise with 'Reynolds's Newspaper,' which was started in 1850 as a fourpenny record of social and political scandals, set forth in such detail and with such comments as might prejudice aristocratic institutions with many readers and amuse all. It was reduced in price to a penny, not so soon as 'Lloyd's,' but soon enough to secure a very large circulation in London, and yet more in the north of England, where Chartist opinions held their ground, and where it acquired an authority which it has since maintained. Styling itself 'democratic,' and aiming always at more Radical changes than have been included in any recognised Radical programme, it is the successor of 'Cobbett's Register' and 'The Poor Man's Guardian' rather than of either Leigh Hunt's or Albany Fonblanque's 'Examiner,' and, since the rise of English Socialism, it has been more in sympathy with the Social Democratic Federation than with any less revolutionary movement. Not giving so comprehensive a summary of general news as is furnished by 'Lloyd's,' but affording ampler space to the occurrences supporting its arguments, and propounding those arguments in forcibly written articles, in which rhetoric is oftener employed than logic and economical laws are made subservient to sentiment, 'Reynolds's' is a formidable spokesman for the most irreconcilable portions of the community.

Of 'The Weekly Dispatch' a somewhat fuller account may be given. This famous promoter of Radicalism in the days of James Harmer and William

Johnson Fox had allowed itself to be far outstripped by 'Lloyd's' and 'Reynolds's,' before January 1869, when its price was reduced from fivepence to twopence, and neither that change nor the further lowering of price to a penny in August 1870 helped it to regain its ground under careless management. It was at a very low ebb when Ashton Wentworth Dilke bought it and, with the first week of 1875, began to reconstruct it as an honest and enterprising working-class paper. Its altered quality was soon discovered, and it rose so rapidly in circulation that fresh offices had to be taken and new machinery provided. Conducting it himself for a year and a half, Dilke placed the editorship in other hands in the summer of 1876 ; but he continued to take a close and constant interest in its progress, writing much for it at times, and either sanctioning or suggesting all the attempts that were made to improve it, until his death on March 12, 1883, when his age was only thirty-three. It was with his concurrence that 'The Dispatch' was throughout ten years a thoroughly independent exponent of advanced Radical opinions, bound to no party, but zealous in supporting all that it approved and criticising all it saw reason to object to in the policy of the Liberal leaders as well as of others, and also seeking to join with its political writing as much literary and other matter as there was room for in the space not required for the record of each week's news. Its aims were in advance of any hitherto proposed for a penny weekly paper, and that they were not in vain was shown by the greatly increased circulation and influence of 'The Dispatch.'

Aiming especially to be an adequate working-class journal, 'The Dispatch' carefully followed and discussed the various trades union and other industrial questions of the day in their political and economical relations,

commending or blaming as a spirit of fairness seemed to require, and gaining respect and influence by its impartiality. The conditions of various trades and of those employed in them, in town and country, and the need or chances of amelioration by effort on the part of the workers themselves or by legislative action, were discussed in detail by competent writers, and particular attention was paid to the various political questions in which the working classes were particularly concerned; among them London government and financial reform, ecclesiastical abuses, and amendment of the House of Lords. Of lighter sort, and with fictitious colouring, but all intended to call attention to remediable defects in our social arrangements, were long series of sketches by George R. Sims, James Runciman, Richard Dowling, Arthur Sketchley, George Manville Fenn, and many others; and among the leader writers were James Allanson Picton, Colonel Robert D. Osborn, Eliza Orme, John Macdonald, Thomas Purnell, and Robert Williams, to whom must be added as a contributor of exceptional service Mrs. Emily Crawford, who sent every week from Paris a chronicle and exposition of French politics, more serious in its Radical purport than her lively communications to 'Truth.'

'The Dispatch' was an outspoken critic of all the proceedings of the Beaconsfield government, and it criticised as boldly all the proceedings of the Gladstone administration that followed. It protested, at starting, against the great preponderance of Whigs in the cabinet formed after the general election of 1880 had given so clear a 'mandate' in favour of Radical reforms; and it protested afterwards persistently against the lack or insufficiency of remedial domestic legislation, against the perversion of authority by enforcing a mischievous and disastrous despotism in Ireland instead of accord-

ing to its people the full measure of local government and complete independence as regards their own affairs to which they were entitled and with which they might then have been satisfied, and—along with much else to the same or like intent—against the reckless blundering incident to all our dealings with Egypt and the carrying on of the war in the Soudan. While the Reform Bills of 1884 and 1885 were in progress, it pointed out from week to week what it considered to be grave errors and pernicious defects in them, and warned the Radicals who applauded them of the heavy misfortunes which, as consequences of those errors and defects, have since befallen them. 'The Representation of the People Bill,' as it said, 'left whole sections of the community, though fully entitled to the franchise, without any place in the representative machinery, and gave an inordinate amount of political power to "the classes," which Mr. Gladstone was not then as anxious as he is now to put in due subordination to "the masses."' The Redistribution of Seats Bill, abolishing the old three-cornered constituencies, which had not worked at all well as an experiment, divided the entire country, with a few exceptions, into single-member constituencies, approximately but not exactly equal in size, in each of which a bare majority of voters could elect its member, leaving quite unrepresented a minority that might be scarcely less than half of the whole, and thus leaving vast numbers of capable citizens in the aggregate of the constituencies without any spokesmen in parliament.'¹

The ten years' heresy of 'The Dispatch,' in venturing to claim for Radicals the right of thinking and acting for themselves and in urging them to make no more surrender of their independence than an honest opportunism prescribes, culminated in its opposition to

¹ *Weekly Dispatch*, January 30, 1887.

the Irish Home Rule and Land Purchase Bills brought forward by Gladstone in 1886. It had all along insisted, as Bright, Mill, Fawcett, and many others had done, on complete justice, political and social, being rendered to the Irish people, and it reiterated this view during the general election of 1885. It deprecated, however, the sudden adoption by the Gladstonians of a policy they had hitherto condemned and gave reasons for regarding that policy as impolitic, inexpedient, and injurious alike to the Irish and the English. It looked with distrust on the projects of the third Gladstonian administration, and when those projects, defeated in parliament, led to another general election, it objected to such a 'mandate' being given by the constituencies to Gladstone as would empower him to deal with Irish and all other affairs, during the lifetime of the parliament elected as his echo, in any way he chose. 'We do not for a moment doubt,' it said, 'that Mr. Gladstone's conversion to Home Rule was genuine, and as conscientious as may be his conversion a year or more hence to disestablishment of the Church or abolition of the House of Lords, should either of these courses be necessary means to his acquisition or retention of power. Mr. Gladstone is always genuine and conscientious in adopting such views of national policy as he thinks the majority of the nation—that is, of the electorate—desires; but, with all respect be it said, when he has decided that the nation—that is, the electorate—wishes a course to be taken, he claims to himself the right of shaping this course in ways satisfactory to his own mind.'¹ To allowing any one, however popular, and with whatever credentials, to assume such a position of supremacy 'The Dispatch' objected, on general even more than on special grounds, the summing up of which may be quoted to show the

¹ *Weekly Dispatch*, January 30, 1887.

attitude taken up by the paper, between 1876 and 1886, as regards Radical politics at large.

'The very life of Radicalism,' it was said, 'consists in free inquiry and independence of thought. The Radicalism that rejects these may be excused, but it is ignorant; and until a better rule prevails, until we reach such a stage of political education as enables the people to think intelligently and discriminatingly for themselves instead of accepting their opinions ready made from any one else, Radicalism will be in a bad way. The great weakness of democracy is that it makes easy the path of demagogues. Monarchs and oligarchs generally know their own minds, and, unless they are shams and not worthy even to bear such contemptible titles as those of monarchs and oligarchs, contrive to get pretty much what they wish for. But democrats are many-minded, and, without such wide intelligence as helps them to keep their impulses, however generous, in check, and by mutual guidance to combine to reach safe ends by safe means, they are fickle and rash, and in peril at every turn of being misled by demagogues, who may be none the less misleading because their zeal is unselfish and they are as amiable as clever. A demagogue need not be a bad man—he may be an altogether estimable man in many respects; but, as a demagogue, he cannot fail to be mischievous. The ruin of all the old democracies was in the opportunity they allowed to demagogues, well-meaning or ill-meaning, to rise to power, with a *vox populi* as their mandate, and then to mould the popular will into compliance with their own. Democratic institutions have been of such slow growth in England, and are still so far short of completeness, that we need be in no fear yet of their downfall. But we can hinder or hasten on their progress according to the use to which

we allow the powers we are acquiring to be put. We Radicals make merry, and also express some alarm, about the Tory democracy that had Disraeli for its apostle a generation ago, and now has Lord Randolph Churchill ; and there is reason both for our alarm and for our merriment. But how about ourselves and our own aspirations after a truer democracy ? The prospects of Radicalism, which is or should be synonymous with true democracy, cannot be bright so long as it consents to make anything like a demagogue of even the best and wisest man living—as some consider that Mr. Gladstone is.’¹

The utterance of such sentiments, Ashton Dilke being dead, was not thought helpful to the Gladstonian scheme for dealing with Irish or other affairs, and a new editor was found for ‘The Weekly Dispatch’ in January 1887.

Three other cheap Sunday papers of long standing need only be briefly referred to, as whatever political importance they formerly had has dwindled away. ‘The Weekly Times,’ most resembling ‘The Weekly Dispatch’ in its general plan, had considerable influence for many years after it was started in 1847, circulating extensively in the provinces before the competition of local journals became serious. It was bought in 1884 by Passmore Edwards, who soon afterwards amalgamated it with ‘The Weekly Echo,’ an ambitious but unsuccessful Sunday paper, which had been commenced while ‘The Echo’ was in the hands to which he had transferred it; and since then the combination has appeared as ‘The Weekly Times and Echo.’ ‘The News of the World,’ once famous also, has for some time contained little more than selections from the news supplied by the daily papers. ‘The Sunday Times,’ Radical and influential

¹ *Weekly Dispatch*, January 30, 1887.

under the management of Daniel Whittle Harvey and some of his successors, lost ground on its becoming a Conservative organ, and was further injured by the secession of many of its writers to 'The People' when that journal was founded in October 1881.

With the exception of 'England'—a Saturday miscellany, which appeared in April 1880 as 'the only national and Conservative weekly newspaper for all classes,' and which undertook to propound the views of Ashmead Bartlett and his brother William Burdett-Coutts, on foreign and domestic affairs, and latterly to be the special organ of the Primrose League as well as of the Fair Trade League—'The People' is the only recently started exponent of Tory opinions through the cheap weekly press. An offshoot of 'The Globe,' and edited at first by Dr. Sebastian Evans, it has judiciously kept its partisanship within narrow bounds. Limiting its political writing to a column or two each week, it has followed the lead of 'The Weekly Dispatch' in devoting much space to lively articles on social and general subjects, with, however, a larger proportion of fiction. Issuing a novel by Zola, and other novels by Wilkie Collins, Grant Allen, and others, its plan has been rather to furnish a large budget of readable matter for Sunday amusement, including all the important news of the week, than much political guidance.

For such guidance in Tory lines Londoners have to look chiefly to the high-priced weeklies, among which 'The Observer' holds a place of its own as the only Sunday paper dealing with the day's news nearly as fully and exclusively as the other six days' news is dealt with by the weekday morning journals, and to those morning journals. In the latter many noteworthy changes were brought about by the political crisis that may be considered as having begun in

1880 and as not yet concluded ; but with these, for the most part, newspaper readers are too familiar for it to be necessary to make much mention of them.

'The Times,' having given a hearty support to nearly all the measures of Lord Beaconsfield's government, was a severe critic, and often a violent opponent of the Gladstone administration. 'It was a great point to secure "The Times,"' wrote Abraham Hayward on April 24, 1880, on the morning after he had paid a night visit to the new premier, just returned from Windsor with authority to form a new cabinet ; 'so, after being told the exact state of things, I went off in the middle of the night to the "Times" office, where I saw Chenery, the editor, an intimate friend of mine, and the first leading article of to-day was the result.'

But Hayward's experiments as a diplomatist between friends in Downing Street and friends in Printing House Square were not so successful as those of Greville and others in former days. The diplomats, and the ministers, and the editors, and the papers themselves, were all different. Chenery did not see his way to enter into any alliance with Gladstone, even if such had been sought from him. On all the great questions at issue 'The Times' only supported the government when both were in the wrong. It encouraged meddling in Egypt and elsewhere, coercion in Ireland, postponement of domestic reforms, and, with few exceptions, used all its influence in promoting mis-

¹ *Correspondence of Abraham Hayward*, vol. ii. p. 315. Another amusing extract from this book (vol. ii. p. 320), pointing to one line of deterioration in *The Times*, may here be quoted. 'When Mrs. Langtry made her private *début*,' we are told, the date being December 1881, 'the late Mr. Chenery expressed his relief at discovering that Mr. Hayward possessed a ticket for the performance, and was willing to write a notice of it. The critique was short and wisely moderate ; but it struck the keynote which the press of two countries at once took up.'

chievous undertakings everywhere ; but it gave no help to any of the Radical movements that Gladstone had sought and obtained authority from the constituencies to further. When Chenery died, on February 11, 1884, and George Earle Buckle succeeded to the editorship, there was no change in the general policy of 'The Times.' Such change as ensued showed itself especially in 1886, when the Gladstonian assent to the Home Rule demands of the parliamentary leaders of the Irish Nationalist party led to a series of violent and vindictive attacks on Gladstonians, as well as on all who were regarded as associated with them, culminating in what was alleged to be a convincing exposure of the enormities of 'Parnellism and Crime.' If 'The Times' was right in its main contention, there were many who thought that the force of its arguments was weakened by the passionate vehemence of their presentment. In this, however, 'The Times' only adhered to its traditional policy.

While the same cause of offence to all who were not able to follow Gladstone in his conversion to Home Rule merely provided 'The Standard' and 'The Morning Post' with fresh material for upholding Conservative opinions, it strengthened 'The Daily Telegraph' in the abandonment of Liberalism of which it had given signs long before ; and it induced 'The Daily Chronicle' to recognise as leaders Joseph Chamberlain and Lord Hartington rather than Gladstone and John Morley. 'The Daily News' was left to stand alone among the London morning papers as the Gladstonian champion, and its championship was not deemed adequate.

'The Daily News' had surpassed all its rivals, as heretofore, by its special correspondence during the Egyptian and the Soudanese campaigns, throughout

which John Macdonald was its chief representative ; but it had suffered in some respects through the zeal shown by it in foreign enterprises, not only in war time but on all occasions, great or small, which could afford material for the smart writing of the clever men in its employ. Of those men Archibald Forbes was but the most conspicuous among several. They were men too serviceable to be dispensed with, and to be allowed to pass out of reach when opportunity might arise for them to make the use of their pens for which they were best fitted. It was therefore necessary to find work of some sort for them, and the work was found in ways not altogether helpful to the paper. Forbes, for instance, was more at home on a battle-field than at a meeting of the British Association ; and though, if sent to Ireland to describe a street riot, he might be trusted to furnish a long and graphic account of all its incidents, there was more risk of inaccuracies in such a narrative being detected than there would be if his theme were some foreign occurrence witnessed by few Englishmen, or none, besides himself. There was waste of power, to say the least, in much of the skilful writing that appeared in 'The Daily News,' and along with this there was scanting of the more prosaic work of leader writing, requiring, as it does, such intimate knowledge of the complicated machinery of politics, and such thoughtful observation of current affairs, as those who are special correspondents by profession cannot be expected to have taste or training for. From these and other causes 'The Daily News,' deservedly popular in war time, was not successful as the main exponent and promoter, in the London press, of the Gladstonian policy to which it was loyal in intention. As a revolution of some sort was considered necessary, Frank Hill was summarily dismissed early in 1886 from the

editorship he had long held with dignity. With him went Justin McCarthy and some other of his old writers. Henry Lucy, who succeeded him, introduced certain novelties into the paper, but with so little advantage that a year's experience proved the expediency of another change.

The time had passed, however, for any rearrangements of editors or writers on any of the London papers to restore or to maintain for them their old supremacy. Provincial journalism, which had been steadily growing in every way, took a new start during the time of the Russo-Turkish war. All mechanical obstacles to its progress had been removed before then, and the paths were clear for their full development so soon as public questions of absorbing interest arose on which provincial journalists, as capable in most respects as the London journalists, could write with clearer apprehension of local opinion, and in truer sympathy with it. The Russo-Turkish war and its connection with English politics were only part, and foremost in time, of those modern questions. Our enterprises in Afghanistan, in South Africa, in Egypt and elsewhere, were of the same sort. The excitement incident to the procuring of the Reform Acts of 1885, and all the discussion of local reforms and of general reforms with special bearings in divers localities, bore lasting effects. The fresh controversy that sprang up concerning Irish grievances, no new subjects but newly stated, and the various inferences drawn therefrom as regards self-government, land law amendment, and much else, constituted the latest, thus far, and the most disturbing of the forces by which much that was formerly imperial in journalism has been localised, and by which provincial journalism, fully prepared for the growth, has come to be in many respects imperial

thus depriving metropolitan journalism of its old claim to be the only imperial journalism, but not debarring it from being, if right use is made of the altered conditions, as serviceable and as dignified as heretofore.

The progress of provincial journalism in recent times is very remarkable, and eminently suggestive. A proper setting forth of its history, however, would involve not only a detailed account of some dozens of separate enterprises, but also a careful inquiry into the causes and issues of the wide differences of opinion which have arisen in various parts of the country ; and it may not be attempted here. Country newspapers had been growing and multiplying, during nearly two centuries, as small weekly sheets, before the removal of the stamp duty and the paper duty cleared the way for mighty developments springing from many sources of national expansion which fiscal burdens could only hinder ; and their history throughout the past generation, if scarcely more interesting, is vastly more important than that of the previous six or seven generations. Both interest and importance have increased, moreover, since 1874. In the lines of farther advance made by metropolitan journalism provincial journalism has shared ; and where that has lost ground, it has gained in most respects.

In the south of England, where, with a few exceptions, country newspapers were first in the field, they have, with a few exceptions, been laggard in their progress. This, as regards the home counties, is chiefly due to the predominance of London and the convenience of communication with it. Brighton has four daily papers and nearly a dozen others, but it is so much of a suburb of London that its local journalism is rather suburban than provincial ; and the same may

be said, with modifications, concerning some hundreds of other country towns and their newspapers. There is more room for independence, and greater need of it, farther off, as in Bristol, where 'The Western Daily Press' led the way in 1858 and, under Peter Stewart MacIver, has been a vigorous exponent of Radical opinion as well as a prosperous journal, competing in the west of England with two formidable daily rivals, the Liberal 'Bristol Mercury' and the Conservative 'Bristol Times,' along with a crowd of weeklies and some other dailies, among them the Liberal 'Bath Herald.'

Birmingham, again, and more conspicuously, as 'the metropolis of the Midlands,' has become a busy centre of newspaper activity. Its 'Gazette,' after more than sixty years' life as a weekly, began in 1862 to be the daily organ of Conservatism for the squires and farmers in the district; and its 'Daily Post,' dating from 1857, is only the foremost of a great company of journals, daily and weekly, which has sustained and extended the political life of 'the black country' and its surroundings. Edited for some time by George Dawson, 'The Birmingham Daily Post' has both interpreted and educated the temper of this thriving and enterprising part of England during the past quarter of a century; shown alike in the boldness and thoroughness with which its municipal institutions have been contrived, and in the zeal with which it has applied itself to political reforms, under the direction of men like John Bright and Joseph Chamberlain.

The pioneers of provincial journalism in its most vigorous stage are to be found, however, farther north. Both 'The Manchester Guardian' and 'The Manchester Examiner' were of great influence before they were converted into daily papers in 1855. 'The Guardian' was an outcome of the agitation for popular rights

which had the Peterloo massacre for one of its incidents and, long edited by Jeremiah Garnett and with John Edward Taylor for its principal proprietor, it advanced with the times. 'The Examiner,' yet more Radical in later years, was an outcome of the anti-corn-law movement, and in it Alexander Ireland, Henry Dunckley, and others gave forcible utterance to the views of Cobden and Bright. The Lancashire Conservatives, at the same time, have their 'Manchester Courier,' and also their 'Liverpool Courier,' both altered from weekly to daily papers in 1863. The Liberal 'Liverpool Mercury,' edited by John Lovell, is older, and 'The Liverpool Daily Post' is yet older and more Liberal, having for its editor Edward Richard Russell. In Lancashire alone more than two dozen daily papers are now published, at least half of them, however, being halfpenny sheets, designed rather to provide their readers with afternoon news than with political guidance.

Yorkshire and the more northern counties, with their great manufacturing and mining populations, are as well supplied, the Liberals having their 'Leeds Mercury,' long edited by Thomas Wemyss Reid, their 'Newcastle Chronicle,' the property of Joseph Cowen, their 'Sheffield Independent,' their 'Bradford Observer,' and their 'York Herald,' with some others, and the Conservatives their 'Yorkshire Post,' and 'Sheffield Daily Telegraph,' and 'Newcastle Daily Journal.' In Scotland, too, though it has only twenty daily papers to compare with the hundred and fifty of England and Wales, national as well as local politics are worthily represented by the Liberal 'Scotsman,' 'Glasgow Herald,' 'Dundee Advertiser,' and, oldest of all, 'North British Mail,' and by the Conservative 'Edinburgh Courant' and 'Glasgow News.'

It is noteworthy that—with a few exceptions, the

chief being 'The Sheffield Daily Telegraph,' which owes much of its success to Sir William Leng, and 'The Manchester Courier'—the leading country papers are of varying shades of Liberalism, most of them, indeed, having been Radical at starting. They were commenced or developed from weekly originals, to encourage local demands for reforms of general importance, but for which special local needs arose ; and their prosperity, otherwise unattainable, has been largely aided by the energy they have shown in dealing with strictly local concerns, and also in supplying their readers with ample information on all general affairs, apart from politics. Their greatest achievements consisted, for some time, in the establishment of branches in London, where their own representatives procured for them special reports of parliamentary proceedings and other matter in abundance, all of which, as a rule, was sent down by telegraph, so as to be ready for publication in the country towns quite as early as the similar reports prepared for the London papers could appear in them ; but the success resulting from this enterprise soon led to bolder exploits. In war time and other emergencies some of the provincial journals have employed their own correspondents, and have received from them as full and authentic accounts of far-off occurrences as have been obtained by any but the most painstaking of the metropolitan journals. In such ways they have rivalled the older London dailies as general newspapers, and having reached that level, they have found it easy to outstrip their London rivals as leaders, for and in their own districts, of opinion on general as well as local affairs.

This later stage, in which many of the weekly country papers have shared to a large extent the functions of the dailies, was reached about the time of the

general election of 1874. The return of Conservative members for a great many constituencies that it was considered, even under the franchise then in force, should have been represented by Liberals, aroused widespread feelings of discontent which, leading to fresh political organisations, first in Birmingham, and then in various other parts of the country, led also and as a branch of the same movement to the quickening of political energy in, and by, the newspapers. Throughout the six years of the Beaconsfield administration all the Liberal journals that were not content to be mere local news-sheets were keen critics and zealous instructors ; and to them in large measure, and far more than to the London journals, must be attributed the astounding result of the general election of 1880 when Liberals of all shades combined in overthrowing the Tory government. That the combination was not a firm union, however, was apparent even before the victory was won ; and before the Gladstone administration had been formed there were signs of division among the Liberals, shown more plainly in the provincial than in the metropolitan newspapers.

All the great questions brought prominently before the public between 1880 and 1885—touching both the government's foreign policy, and especially its occupation of Egypt, its treatment of Arabi Pasha, and its reckless blunderings in the Soudan, and also its domestic policy, especially its despotic dealings with the Irish—provoked more outspoken and more various criticism from those country newspapers that were not pledged to abject subservience than from the Liberal London papers. There was almost a truce while the Parliamentary Franchise Bill and the Redistribution of Seats Bill were being discussed and passed, all sections of Liberals being anxious for the promised reforms, and

not many of them looking critically into the details of the measures or being desirous of any improvements upon the plans adopted by Gladstone and Chamberlain and their influential friends. Then, however, the truce ended. In anticipation of the general election of 1885 the Liberal country papers divided into clearly marked out factions, some adhering to the leadership of Gladstone, with Lord Hartington as his probable successor, and claiming to speak for the moderate Liberals, others siding with Chamberlain and the advocates of extensive reforms in England and of just dealings with the Irish. The lines of division continued afterwards without much change, although there was a considerable shuffling of leaders, and with no more deterioration of quality than is inevitable to the setting of sentiment before principle, and to such a new reading of the old adage, 'Measures, not men,' as assumes that men who promise pleasant measures may be trusted to keep their word.

The altered conditions under which the long standing Irish problem was presented to the consideration of the English people in the early part of 1886, alienated by far the larger part of the London press from the Liberalism that made loyalty to Gladstone the chief if not the only clause in its creed. On the other hand they greatly strengthened the Gladstonian following in the provincial press, and by this process Irish journalism, for the first time in our history, was brought into close association with English journalism, if not made actually a part of it.

Until 1880, or thereabouts, the popular, as distinguished from the official, journalism of Ireland was almost foreign in its character. 'The Irish Times,' which, according to its programme, has been, since it was established in 1859, 'a Protestant, Liberal-Conser-

vative, or, in other words, independent journal,' was by most people regarded in England as a sufficient exponent and champion of English rule in Ireland under successive viceroys and chief secretaries employed as ministers of the crown; and to Conservatives who were not satisfied with 'The Irish Times,' 'The Dublin Daily Express,' and such other papers as 'The Cork Constitution' and 'The Belfast Newsletter,' offered more consistent Toryism. In Ulster 'The Northern Whig' was always Liberal, according to the English use of the term; but there were not many other Liberal newspapers in Ireland. 'The Freeman's Journal,' with Edward Dwyer Gray as its editor, and, as the chief of the weekly papers, 'The Nation,' edited by T. D. Sullivan, with many others of less note but great influence, were till lately in such antagonism to the predominant feeling of all English parties about Ireland, that they were regarded as alien publications. In so far as they were read at all in England, they were read, even by Liberals, with horror and resentment, and, if recognised as in any way representative of national opinion in Ireland, they were regarded for that reason as all the more dangerous and reprehensible. Had they been differently read and regarded, and had they been taken at their real worth by English Liberals in former days, some of the political troubles of these later days might have been avoided.

In Ireland there were in 1866 only 15 daily and 183 weekly papers, some being class organs and local sheets of very limited circulation. The rest of the United Kingdom had, also including many publications of small account, 171 newspapers published every day, and 1,806 published once a week or oftener, 21 of the former and 435 of the latter being issued in London.¹

¹ Mitchell's *Newspaper Press Directory* for 1887.

CHAPTER XXV.

NOWADAYS.

1887.

THE conditions and methods of English journalism have varied immensely and continuously since 1621 when Nathaniel Butter produced his 'Weekly News,' but nearly all the more important changes wrought during the past eight generations have been permanent in spite of variation. The journalism of to-day is a development, or an aggregate of developments, and no new change that may happen is likely to be more than a modification of the arrangements now in force. These therefore are worth taking account of.

It is in the mechanical arrangements of newspapers that the steadiest progress has been made. Types and the processes of type-setting have not been much altered; paper and printers' ink are only different in quality from what they were in the middle ages; and even the modern system of printing is but an expansion of the system adopted centuries ago. This expansion, however, has been wonderful. A double sheet of 'The Times,' containing about a hundred times as much matter as a sheet of Butter's 'Weekly News,' can now be turned out in fewer hours, and a thousand copies of the new can be issued more quickly and with hardly more manual labour than a dozen of the old. Various ingenious devices, before and since the invention of the

steam engine, and especially the steam engine itself and its applications, have helped us to all this, and to other advantages both in the distribution of newspapers and in the collection as well as distribution of news to be given in them, while further help in many ways and of immense value has come from the electric telegraph and other extensions and teachings of science. The whole mechanism of newspapers has been vastly improved during the past two and a half centuries, and especially during the past half-century.

Hardly less remarkable has been the change in the position of newspaper producers—of the proprietors and capitalists chiefly, but also of the editors and writers. Butter was at once the John Walter and the John Thaddeus Delane of James I.'s days, but there was not much resemblance, save in their common humanity and in their connection with newspapers, between Butter and Walter, or even between Butter and Delane. In lieu of the shillings that Butter laboriously earned, at the risk of imprisonment by the Star Chamber, many of his successors amass thousands of pounds, and are great landowners and members of parliament; and in lieu of the few small pages of straggling news 'taken out of the High Dutch' that he offered to his readers at uncertain intervals, whenever he was allowed or able to publish a pamphlet, his other successors are now required each day, not only to tell their readers what is being done in every part of the world, but also to instruct them in every imaginable line of thought and action. It is not easy to conceive how newspapers can make much more progress than they have already made, either as business concerns or as guides of public opinion.

Newspapers, if they are meant to prosper and to be really useful to the public, are and must be business concerns almost before anything else. Proprietors,

editors, and writers alike may be philanthropists and enthusiasts, and, if they have not somewhat more than the average amount of philanthropy or enthusiasm, they are hardly likely to pursue any of these callings of their own accord, though they may be driven into them by force of circumstances. It is by no means rare, moreover, for philanthropy, genuine or spurious, strong political partisanship or zealous propagandism of some sort, to be the dominating motive for the taking up of newspaper business of one kind or another, and enthusiasm, healthy or unhealthy in its promptings and leanings, is often needed for the facing of difficulties that would deter men of more sober temperament. But these are the complements, if not the exceptions, of newspaper enterprise, which, if it is to fare well and be of lasting benefit, must be entered upon and carried through in the ordinary way of business. It may be thought, indeed, that in some newspaper enterprise of the present day there is too much, rather than too little, of the prosaic commercial spirit. The community suffers, though the individuals connected with it may gain, when a paper is 'worked' for money-making purposes alone, like a shop, or a factory, or a patent medicine. But this need not and does not very often happen. Journalists of all grades, from the penny-a-liner to the capitalist manager, claim to do their work, and do it best, in the spirit of a professional man rather than of a tradesman—of the preacher, the physician, or the soldier, who is only honest when he proves himself 'worthy of his hire.'

The absolute freedom of the press that has been gradually achieved has brought what may be some disadvantages along with its many advantages. In this age of cheap newspapers and of universal demand for them, a mild Libel Act and a few easy rules as regards

registration, meant to be of use in enforcing it, are nearly all that any one can regard as standing in the way of complete liberty, which may be license, in the publication of anything that producers can sell and buyers choose to consume. The results of this removal of restraints have amply confirmed the arguments of the reformers, of Burke, Erskine, and Fox in one age, of Mill, Cobden, and Bright in another. Sedition, blasphemy, scurrility, and immorality, if they have not been quite kept out of newspapers, have dwindled down and have lost all their force now that enlightened public opinion has substituted a new censorship for that of the old benighted tyranny. Such unwholesome journalism as once flourished in spite of arbitrary laws and vicious restraints has been rendered insignificant by the freedom that has enabled wholesome journalism to grow so plentifully as almost to cover the field. Unwholesome growths remain, however, and some unhealthy influences are apparent in nearly all newspapers. Stray murmurs are still heard against the liberty under which the journalism the murmurers object to is allowed to exist; and where, as in Ireland even now, their views are shared by the authorities, the attempts to enforce them have most cruel and mischievous effects. Louder complaint, moreover, is made by others who, without going so far as to call upon the legislature to suppress the journalism that is obnoxious to them, hold the journalists and the newspaper proprietors responsible for it. These complainers may be reminded that, with no more exceptions than serve to prove the rule, only such journalism is provided as there is a market for. If it is unpleasant to many that there should be survivals of the old Monmouth Street and Holywell Street literature, that the betting-ring and other adjuncts of 'sport' should have organs of their own in the press,

that loathsome police cases and law cases should be detailed by respectable newspapers for family reading, and so forth, these things are only as they are because so many newspaper readers require journalism of the obnoxious sort that the journalists are encouraged or compelled to satisfy the demand. All that can be fairly said against the newspapers in this respect is that, they being business concerns, and the competition among them being as keen as it is, their conductors are not self-sacrificing enough to withhold such information as the readers seek.

Not only have we now almost complete freedom of the press, but journalism is, as it always has been, one of the freest of all trades ; and here also what may be disadvantages are mixed with the advantages. No apprenticeship is needed for entering it, and no preliminaries are required for participation in its highest rewards. As a matter of fact, indeed, those rewards are often assigned to men sufficiently qualified for them by native wit or training in other ways, without any previous newspaper drudgery, and therefore, inevitably, to the detriment of the drudges who, fully entitled to promotion, may have been vainly hoping for it through many years. A smart member of parliament, a successful barrister, a versatile clergyman, a retired schoolmaster, a popular novelist, or any one else with enough influence or intellect, or with a name likely to prove useful, may slip into an editorship or be made a principal leader writer in preference to men of long standing in the office, who perhaps have to teach him his duties and correct his blunders. These latter also suffer because, in most cases, the work they continue doing is of a kind that almost any one with aptitude for it can do. Such moderate skill in writing as every schoolboy should possess, with a knowledge of shorthand in some cases,

and a fair amount of general intelligence in all, enables a novice quickly to become a proficient in some of the largest departments of newspaper work, and the newly imported novices, by reason of the freshness they bring to the business, are sometimes more acceptable than the jaded proficients. This state of things may be inevitable, but it causes some harm to journalism as a whole, or much of it, as well as to many journalists. Unhappily for them, and perhaps also for the public, their calling is one that is more easily taken up than abandoned. It would not be more unfair to say, with Lord Beaconsfield, that ‘critics are men who have failed in literature or in art,’ than to say that journalists are men who are unfit for any other occupation ; but the temperaments that incline them to journalism are apt to render other pursuits distasteful to them, and distaste or inaptitude is encouraged by the habits or the necessities incident to the pursuit they have chosen. One who by accident or of set purpose has become a journalist may before long see reason to regret his position, may soon discover that his chances of advancement in it are small, and may grow callous or desperate, but he seldom migrates to another line of life, and when he does he seldom succeeds in it. Hence, though the Fleet Street of to-day is in many ways an improvement on the Grub Street of the last century, the traditions and infirmities of Grub Street are not extinct.

These remarks apply rather to the rank and file of journalism than to its captains ; but the rank and file, of course, constitute by much its larger part, and are—along with the proprietors and editors, the compositors, printers, and machinists—the chief producers of newspapers. Leader writing and original criticism of various sorts, though now the sole material of some papers, like ‘The Saturday Review,’ and indispensable to nearly all,

are but a modern branch of journalism, growing slowly in response to the demand that newspapers should contain much or, at any rate, something besides news. There are no clear lines of separation between news and criticism, each now of divers and diverse kinds, and the gradations between the lowest and highest stages of their producers are even more uncertain, seeing that so many journalists are at different times both reporters and commentators, and frequently are both at the same time ; but it is important to an understanding of the present conditions and methods of journalism that they should be severally looked at.

The business of news-collecting has been considerably modified and vastly extended within the past generation or so. The functions of the penny-a-liner have been hardly lightened or simplified, but they have been much altered, by the establishment of such organisations as the Press Association, which collects and distributes English news for all the newspapers that care to avail themselves of its help, pretty much as Reuter's Agency has become the great importer and retailer of every sort of news from abroad. The system of co-operation or comprehensive service of newspapers carried out on a large scale by these organisations is imitated or borrowed from in numberless other instances within narrower limits. All the daily papers, and many of the weeklies, in and out of London, still have their own reporters, few or many, who collect information exclusively for their regular employers, and this is especially the case as regards reports of proceedings in parliament and at public meetings elsewhere ; but even 'The Times' makes large use of outside help, and a great many papers depend almost entirely upon such help. The result is that, not only in London, but also in less degree throughout the country, there is a curious

subdivision of the labour of news collecting, by which each collector, confining himself to a small area, and perhaps only to certain varieties of news, is able to perform the task he takes upon himself much more thoroughly than he otherwise could, and to dispose of his information in several newspaper offices instead of in but one. London, for instance, is parcelled out into several districts, in each of which are as many news-collectors and local reporters as there is room for, who divide among themselves the different sorts of news to be reported. At every police court two or three—rivals or partners—are in constant attendance to take notes of all interesting cases brought forward, and the same men, being generally in intimate relations with the police, are in a position to give early information about street disturbances, robberies, murders, or whatever else may occur. Others look after coroners' inquests, and the like ; and in the same way provision is made for the prompt reporting of accidents, fires, and casualties of every kind, with as much trivial matter as can be found to eke out the more important when the supply of this is scanty. That a good deal of the matter is trivial few can doubt, but as it pleases many readers and does not often hurt any, there is fair excuse for its publication. The same methods being pursued in other parts as in London, modern newspaper readers are certainly enabled to know more of the general condition of society than did their fathers, and thereby many reforms of abuses may be promoted.

Penny-a-lining has done much, by bringing ugly things to light, to lead to their removal. It is their own fault if newspaper readers are not well aware of the vice, folly, and misery around them and needing correction, of the undeserved hardships endured by many of their neighbours, of the remediable evils exist-

ing everywhere, towards the remedying of which the first step is that their existence should be made known. The newspapers tell us much—and tell it more simply, and perhaps more truthfully—which used to be detailed only in such novels as Charles Dickens's and Charles Reade's, and they emphasise the teachings conveyed in such later novels as some of Walter Besant's. This is not quite a novelty in journalism, and it is often merely accidental to the purpose of the reporters, whose function is to state facts, not to preach sermons ; but it more than compensates for the worthlessness—and even for the mischievousness—of some of the news they detail.

That at times the news is very mischievous, however, must not be forgotten. Penny-a-liners are as apt as other people to be biassed in their opinions, and misinformed as to facts ; and they are tempted to write in accordance with the bias of their employers, or to supply the kind of information expected from them. Grave injury may be done by the publication of one-sided, garbled, or false news. Individuals have thus been grievously wronged, and whole classes cruelly prejudiced. Strikes and lock-outs in the mining and industrial districts, for instance, have been, if not actually brought about, at any rate encouraged and prolonged, by unfair and perhaps even malicious reports as to the causes or circumstances of disputes between employers and men ; and many abuses have been strengthened through the credence given to interested reporters. So it has been especially, recently and for a long time past, with Irish affairs. The jealousies of race, religion, and class have persistently shown themselves in ostensibly accurate descriptions of quarrels, outrages, and oppressions, for which there was little or no foundation, and have been lamentably fomented thereby. To the inventions and exaggerations on both sides which have appeared in

the columns both of English and of Irish newspapers are in part attributable the troubles in Ireland itself, and between its people and the English majority, which our statesmen have thus far failed to overcome.

Both the faults and the merits of the humbler system of news-reporting are enlarged in the more dignified arrangements that have grown up for providing newspapers with authoritative information either from foreign countries or on questions of special interest in our own kingdom. The 'own correspondents' and the 'special correspondents' are only exalted, more responsible, and more influential penny-a-liners, many of them being actually promoted from the ranks, and others being leader-writers and sometimes newspaper proprietors told off for the purpose. The penny-a-liner, it may be noted, now always receives, and generally well deserves, better payment for his work than is implied in the title, too convenient to be in any way offensive, by which he is commonly known. The correspondent holds an office of so much trust, requiring for its proper performance the highest faculties of a journalist, and entailing so much trouble and expense, that his is nearly the best paid of all the departments of newspaper work.

The employment of correspondents in Paris and other continental towns is an old and most useful institution. It acquaints English newspaper readers, few of whom have the means of access to any foreign journals, with the general state of political and other affairs abroad, and may be nearly the liveliest and most instructive reading offered to them. It affords great opportunity, however, for the perversion of public opinion. Most readers are at the mercy of their informants on such matters, and they may be sadly misled through the ignorance or partisanship of instructors who are not wilfully at fault.

They are in worse case when, as too frequently happens, their instructors deliberately aim at misleading them. The risks are lessened by the profusion of correspondence from different hands now appearing in the various papers. Though few readers can be expected to compare the diverse letters, say from Paris, to note their contradictions, and to piece together the several items of news furnished by one or other of the writers, but omitted by the rest, the knowledge that they can be thus checked and supplemented has a wholesome effect on most of the correspondents. In the ordinary course of events, moreover, no particular harm may be done by the conveyance of false impressions as to the character or policy of President Grévy, or Jules Ferry, or Clémenceau, the behaviour of Rochefort or Louise Michel, or the movements of the Bonapartist or Orleanist factions. The risks are greater, however, when international relations are strained ; and newspaper correspondents, publishing vague rumours as facts, compromising statesmen by their innuendoes and forcing on events by their surmises or premature disclosures, may bring about complications that threaten to stop a truce or provoke a war. If some of the English journalists employed in St. Petersburg and Constantinople during and before the latest struggle between Russia and Turkey could have had their way, England would probably have been forced to take part in that struggle, and, since then, no credit is due to some of the English journalists in St. Petersburg and Calcutta, that the difficulties about settling the Afghan boundary were not developed into a *casus belli*. Those and like evils have been averted, in spite of partisan journalists ; but some of their comrades, to give but one instance, must be held in large measure responsible for the prolonged turmoil and confusion of late years incident to English meddling

with Egypt, with Soudan campaigning among its ramifications.

On the other hand the Russo-Turkish war and the Egyptian difficulties furnish recent examples of the good work that newspaper correspondents can do in informing the public and influencing political action by the prompt and truthful revelation of facts that diplomatists would conceal if they could, and statesmen and generals would wink at. It was a correspondent of 'The Daily News' who opened the eyes of the public to the state of things in Bulgaria at the time of the insurrection in 1876, which guided English opinion, under Gladstone's leading, in opposition to Tory plans for involving our nation in the Ottoman designs against the Danubian races; and other correspondents assisted materially in securing for Arabi Pasha such protection as he had against the schemes of his enemies in 1882, and, after that, in exposing some of the blunders and shortcomings of the invaders of the Soudan. War correspondence has grown, in quantity rather than in quality, since William Howard Russell, by his excellent work during the Crimean campaign, made it fashionable and necessary, and its solid value has been lessened in proportion to its increase in pretentiousness; but it still yields ample evidence of the important national service that newspapers can do in ways that would not otherwise be trodden.

It is not all clear gain to the public that the newspapers now have so many able and zealous special correspondents in their employ. These writers are generally better qualified to describe the horrors of a battle field, the exciting incidents of an enemy's march through a hostile country, or other stirring adventures, than to discuss the humdrum affairs of domestic politics or to explore the nooks and crannies of our everyday

life. It may be chiefly in joke that they often complain, when idling about, perforce, in Fleet Street or Westminster, that there is no war for them to take part in ; but the belligerent tastes they have acquired, their reasonable desire for congenial occupation, and other causes, inevitably incline them, just as military men, army contractors, stockjobbers, and others are inclined, to look approvingly on every chance of a new foreign quarrel, and, though their influence may not be great, it is, through their newspaper connections, often more effective than that of the military men and others, in quickening the germs of warfare and in keeping up disturbing controversies on frivolous questions which, to say the least, do not promote a healthy feeling throughout the country. In the absence of serious work, such as they can do best, moreover, other work for which they are less fitted has to be found for them on the newspapers. They are brilliant chroniclers of holiday manœuvres by our ships, soldiers, and volunteers, of jubilee celebrations in Westminster Abbey, and the like ; but such appropriate themes are not often enough provided for them, and much of the 'special' writing that has of late years been plentiful in many of the daily papers, amusing and suggestive in its way, but an awkward mixture of description and narrative, in which the language is too strong, with criticism that is thin and weak, betrays the handiwork of men who have not turned their swords into ploughshares, and who are only trying to use spears as pruning hooks.

At the same time the miscellaneous articles, half news and half comment, and often with an allowable colouring of fiction to the facts set forth, with which nearly all the papers are now more or less freely supplied, are among their most serviceable as well as their most attractive contents. This hybrid between the

news-column and the leading article is of remote origin and steady growth. Defoe made excellent use of it, according to his humour, in the first decade of the eighteenth century, and he has never been without successors and imitators. Dickens helped to give it new shape and value in his contributions to 'The Morning Chronicle' before he started 'The Daily News,' and the long series of articles contributed by Henry Mayhew and others, also to 'The Chronicle,' on 'Labour and the Poor,' were conspicuous examples of the good work that can be done in this line of journalism. James Caird's account of the agricultural condition of England in 1850, in 'The Times,' is another example.

'The Times,' with its ample space and ample resources, has always made large and welcome use of its opportunities in this way. From its files alone could be extracted solid and instructive matter enough on miscellaneous subjects to fill as many volumes as 'The Encyclopædia Britannica,' with which the collection, if it were made judiciously, and duly edited, would bear comparison as a work of permanent value. Sometimes, as many may think, it has misused its opportunities, and allowed partisanship to go grievously astray, as in its articles on 'Parnellism and Crime'; but its sternest critics must admit that on the whole it has done well in this sort of work. Other papers have generally essayed lighter handling of themes both light and serious; instance Sala's and Clark Russell's contributions to 'The Daily Telegraph,' and the contributions of many writers to 'The Standard,' 'The Daily News,' and other papers, some of the daintiest work of the kind being in 'The Gamekeeper at Home,' and other series of delightful sketches by Richard Jefferies in 'The Pall Mall Gazette' and elsewhere. A lower level is taken in this de-

partment of journalism when columns are occupied with thinly-veiled advertisements of enterprising tradesmen, ambitious adventurers, impudent charlatans, and others—called ‘interviews’; but even these may be interesting and, to those who read them aright, not uninteresting. If, moreover, ‘The Pall Mall,’ which claims to surpass all other papers in this line of work, has misused its opportunities by issuing such distorted facts and prurient fancies as appeared in its ‘Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon,’ it may also claim to have helped in hastening or procuring the administration of justice by the sensational portrayal of such experiences as it detailed in ‘The Langworthy Marriage.’

The intermediate ground between the mere reporting of news by one set of writers and the work of other writers in commenting thereon affords scope for several other varieties of journalism. Nearly all newspapers have their ‘city articles,’ and pay more or less attention to financial affairs and the progress of trade; and nearly all deal, trivially or carefully, with new books, new pictures, new plays, new inventions and discoveries, and, on occasion, with popular sports and pastimes. For each of these subjects, and for every other department of thought or action, grave pursuit or stray diversion, there are now special organs in the press. But it is only right that a general newspaper should tell its readers, to whom no other source of information may be open, if not something about everything, at any rate a little about so many things as are interesting to any considerable number of them; and in most of these respects, if not in all, great advance has been made with the growth of journalism. There are still some provincial and local papers whose editors have to be ‘Jacks-of-all-trades,’ leader writers, critics, reporters, and perhaps, on emergency, their own compositors, printers,

publishers, and errand-boys as well. But in the larger newspaper offices, both in London and in the country, a very different state of things now prevails. The editor is the chief of a large staff, and besides the regular writers in his employ, who are often debarred from writing for any other papers, he knows where to obtain as much outside help on any particular subject as he requires. It is possible therefore for nearly every conceivable subject to be dealt with as intelligently and capably in a journal like 'The Times' or 'The Standard' as in any of the organs specially devoted to particular subjects. Sometimes such subjects are better dealt with in the general than in the special newspapers, the risks from bias and prejudice being less, and the risks from ignorance not greater.

Those different risks are serious, however, in the case of nearly all papers. The hurry inevitable to newspaper work may render it necessary, if the required article has to be produced within a given time, for the subject to be assigned, not to the writer most fit to deal with it, but to the one nearest at hand; and even he may not be allowed time, before producing his article, in which to consult his dictionaries and his histories, and recall to his memory facts and views that he has really mastered but has forgotten. The article, accordingly, though it may not betray ignorance, cannot be profound, and, if apparently learned and wise, may be confusing and misleading. This is a serious drawback to the value of much newspaper work, especially the reviewing of books and the noticing of novelties in science or art.

Bias and prejudice are more dangerous. It is no easy matter for a newspaper writer to be always honest and impartial. If he writes on financial concerns and Stock Exchange operations, or on horseracing and other

'sports' connected with the betting-ring, he is liable to very coarse temptations, which he may indignantly resist or to which he may yield. If he is a 'first-nighter' at the theatres, the perils to which he is exposed are more insinuating. He may be anonymous to the public, but he cannot be anonymous to his neighbours and those about whom it is his business to write. He may eschew the society of actors and actresses, but he cannot avoid intercourse with their friends. It is inevitable that he should acquire likes and dislikes which, however zealously kept under restraint, must affect his criticisms. So it may have been even with Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt. So it certainly is nowadays; and hence we find that, constant and considerable as is the attention paid by newspapers to theatrical affairs, and great as is the power of newspaper critics in making or marring the success of new pieces at theatres, their criticisms rarely have any lasting authority. These remarks, however, are only incidental; and theatrical criticism is merely referred to as illustrating an infirmity that is more or less inseparable from nearly all newspaper work.

If grave fault is to be found with any of the modern developments of journalism or modern adaptations of its old forms, the heaviest blame must fall on one which, assuming to itself great dignity and sometimes having great influence, is perhaps harmless and only amusingly contemptible in its more excusable phases, but which is no more at best than an extension of the meanest and riskiest part of the penny-a-liner's craft. 'The first thing required of reporters,' said a too harsh critic of the English newspapers in an American journal, 'is that they shall supply at least as much news as the reporters of the other papers, the second that they shall supply as much more as possible; and a man who takes on himself to discriminate between facts and rumours, and

to remain silent sooner than telegraph or write what he feels sure is a sensational falsehood, but which, for a day at least, if printed, would put his paper in request, is too apt to find his value decline and his prospects grow dim.’¹ That is true of only some, and it is less true of ordinary penny-a-liners than of the writers of ‘London letters’ and of the gossiping paragraphs in ‘society journals,’ and the columns modelled upon them in other papers; nor is it more than partially true of these. ‘These prints,’ said the same critic, concerning the ‘society journals’ and their imitators, ‘live on personalities. Gossip, scandal, innuendo, and insinuation are their meat and drink. Their managers or proprietors have detectives hovering about the lobby of the House of Commons, flitting about the back stairs of houses where the great world congregate, attending popular churches, frequenting the easier kind of clubs, pushing their way into the private houses of the smartest among our public men. They pay their detectives for all the garbage of fashionable or domestic life that they can rake together.’² The allegation is too sweeping; but there is some warrant for it. The methods of ‘The Morning Post’ and of ‘John Bull’ in their earlier days, of ‘The Age,’ ‘The Town,’ and many similar publications before and since their date, unfortunately are not yet obsolete.

Obnoxious and reprehensible as is much of the tittle-tattle printed about noted or notorious members of ‘society,’ it generally injures only the individuals immediately concerned in it, and, though it may be no better than ‘garbage raked together,’ right-minded people suffer but little inconvenience, as they pass it by or go out of their way to avoid it; but the general

¹ *Nation* (New York), August 12, 1869.

² *Ibid.*, July 5, 1877.

harm is greater when the tittle-tattle is about public men, and it may be as mischievous when it takes the form of fulsome praise as when it is prompted by malice. We have lately had plain evidence of the serious misleading of public opinion regarding influential politicians and important political movements, alike from adulation and from slander. The difficulties of the Irish question, which entered on a new stage in 1886, and the divisions among Liberals that were then apparent, can be traced to far deeper causes, but they have certainly been aggravated by the unseemly ways in which, sometimes with as little truth as courtesy, the names of Gladstone, Bright, Chamberlain, Hartington, and many more have been bandied about for the amusement and the profit of journalists 'hovering about the lobby of the House of Commons' and elsewhere. Yet such exploits are counted among the triumphs of journalism in these days, and not merely the humble frequenters of the lobby but also members of parliament who are newspaper editors and newspaper proprietors, not merely the lackeys and the ladies' maids whom Thackeray derided, but titled dames and scions of 'the nobility,' now make a trade of them.

The highest grade of newspaper work, short of editorship, is generally reckoned to be the writing of leading articles on political and other current topics. Defoe, who was the pioneer of so much else in modern journalism, initiated the system of leader writing in George I.'s days, his own political and social discourses, like those of Steele, Addison, Swift, and others, having previously been given in separate essay sheets, while the newspapers concerned themselves almost exclusively with news; and, though often afterwards separate essay-sheets like Wilkes's 'North Briton' appeared, and the best political writing, as by Junius in 'The Public

Advertiser,' was in the form of letters, not of leading articles, there have been plenty of famous and famous-worthy followers of Defoe during the past century and a half. Coleridge, Mackintosh, and their friends and opponents belonged to one period; Leigh Hunt and compeers as different as Canning and Cobbett, to another; Albany Fonblanque, Rintoul, Sterling, and many more, to a third; and the list of eminent writers in our own generation could hardly be compressed into a page. That much of the work now done is inferior in quality to the best that has been done in former times is not surprising. The average of our own day will bear comparison with the average of any earlier day, and, if the quality should content us, the quantity, when account is taken of all the newspapers published throughout the kingdom, must satisfy the most inordinate requirements.

This abundance of leader writing, incidental to the abundance of newspapers, seems to betoken a lowering of its value, which need not imply any lessening of its intrinsic worth. Notwithstanding all the improvements that have been made in newspapers in recent years, and, with a few intervals, ever since their commencement, a very noteworthy change, which ought not to be regarded as a deterioration, and may be a necessary concomitant of the improvements, appears to be now taking place in this respect. Our earliest newspapers offered their readers nothing but news, though of course the news soon began to be selected or written in accordance with the editors' bias. This selection and preference continued long after the editors undertook to instruct their readers, in separate articles, as to the views they should hold on the questions of the day prominently dealt with in their news-columns. Now, however, though nearly all papers give more or less

preference, in their reporting of news, to the subjects or the lines of policy they favour, it is necessary for them to be comparatively impartial in their news reports, as, if they fail to supply such general information as their readers want, the readers will go elsewhere for it. Facts may be garbled, but they cannot be suppressed, and all readers who care to have opinions on the questions of the day are able to form them for themselves, while those who are not independent or intelligent enough to form their own opinions have other sources of inspiration—their immediate friends, influential members of their clubs, or their party leaders. Newspapers are read now chiefly for their general news, or the information on special subjects that are discussed in them. The leading articles, if read at all, are as seldom read for instruction as sermons in church are listened to, if listened to at all, for profit. When these articles coincide with the readers' opinions, they are approved. When the readers disagree with them, they resent them. In neither case have they so much weight as similar articles, written in the same papers and with no more ability, had only a few years ago.

The intelligence, as well as the wilfulness, of newspaper readers has weakened the authority of newspaper writers. The readers, or a great many of them, are now much more on a level with the writers than they used to be, and this approach to equality opens the way to some arrogance on the one side and some servility on the other. The 'thundering' style of Sterling and others, in 'The Times,' is not yet out-of-date, and we can see amusing instances of it every day in one or other of the hundreds of papers that are published, but even the readers who enjoy this style are amused, not awed by it; and this, even more than other styles, when it is employed, is intended rather for the entertainment than

for the instruction of the public. And other styles are too often adopted with the same inferior purpose. Though he may please himself with the thought that he is, or seems to be, guiding public opinion, the leader writer cannot but be aware that he is generally doing little more than following it. More than that, too, and worse—though, in this respect, matters are much the same as they have been at all previous stages in newspaper history—the leader writer is sometimes not even free to give expression to views that he honestly shares with the majority of his readers. He may have ‘to write to order,’ to hold a brief, like a barrister, for the party with which his paper is allied, or for the employer who may have reasons of his own for enforcing particular opinions on questions about which he also, like his subordinate, is not too much bound by party ties for independence to be prudent. Experience shows that, under such conditions, very brilliant articles may be produced ; but there is of necessity more flash than fire in them, and by the better-informed readers this is well understood.

If, however, the leading article, as an exponent and director of public thought, especially on those questions which happen to be of paramount interest at the time of writing, has lost, or is losing, some of its importance, ample scope is left for the doing of effective work by leader writers ; and such work is, on the whole, well done by them. Though newspaper readers, using or abusing the larger opportunities for political thought and action which newspapers have greatly helped in procuring for them, may refuse to be either as much coerced or as much convinced as their fathers were, and may consider themselves qualified to guide rather than to be guided by the newspapers, there is plenty for them to learn and much that they may be taught. The

popular mind appears rarely able to apprehend more than one great subject at a time, if it is able to apprehend that ; and public opinion sways in currents that are too strong—there being always, of course, two contending currents of public opinion on the same subjects—for newspapers to do much towards checking them. So it was during the time of the Russo-Turkish war, and again during the time of Egyptian campaigning, and so it has been since on the question of Irish Home Rule. Political writers can do little to stem these currents directly, and many of them are sorely tempted to follow the lead of platform demagogues and win temporary applause by humouring the whims and pandering to the prejudices of their readers ; but they can do much, if they are wise and honest, and they often really do it, by offering criticisms on side issues, by recalling forgotten truths, and by enforcing neglected arguments, which may serve, if but slowly and partially, to enlighten the public mind, even on matters about which the public mind professes itself too resolute to be enlightened. More than that, though there is generally but one important question to the front, there are always, in a nation so hampered as ours is with unsolved problems at home and growing responsibilities abroad, some scores of important questions in the rear. The shrewd and intelligent political writer will keep these, or such of them as he is able to deal with, in view ; and he can render immense service, for which his readers will be duly grateful, by calling attention to them on suitable occasions, and thus sowing seed which, even if it falls on dry ground at first, may bear fruit hereafter.

The grim humourist who wrote ‘Sartor Resartus’ more than half a century ago declared that ‘the Journalists are now the true Kings and Clergy : henceforth

Historians, unless they are fools, must write not of Bourbon Dynasties, and Tudors and Hapsburgs, but of the Broad-sheet Dynasties, and quite new successive Names, according as this or the other Able Editor, or Combination of Able Editors, gains the world's ear.' And in another chapter he varied his metaphor. 'Hast thou not still Preaching enough? A Preaching Friar settles himself in every village, and builds a pulpit, which he calls Newspaper. Therefrom he preaches what most momentous doctrine is in him, for man's salvation; and dost not thou listen, and believe? Look well, thou seest everywhere a new Clergy of the Mendicant Orders, some bare-footed, some almost bare-backed, fashion itself into shape, and teach and preach, zealously enough, for copper alms and the love of God. These break in pieces the ancient idols; and, though themselves too often reprobate, as idol-breakers are wont to be, mark out the sites of new Churches.'

That fanciful description, only to some extent true at any time, is less true to-day than it was when Carlyle spoke: but there was meaning in his mockery. Newspapers are now thrones and pulpits, and journalism assumes to itself the right and power to control and reform the world; and not without some reason. During these past eight generations it has made mighty progress in England, yielding benefit, in spite of blunders and faults, misdoings and mischances, alike to those who have served in its ranks and to those they have served.

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BRITISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, July 1876.

